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Introduction: Memory, Trauma, and Collective Identity

Memory as a realm for historical study is a relatively recent development in modern scholarship, and much of the research in this field relies heavily on historiography, and for the study of memory in France this includes historiography surrounding the Holocaust and World War II. For the purpose of this thesis, selected works of Pierre Nora and Henry Rousso form the historiographical foundation for analysis of recent historical traumas in France. Specifically Rousso's theory of a "Vichy Syndrome" supplemented by Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire*—"sites" of memory—have shaped my research and the arguments herein relate back to these theories.¹ Using this framework, I attempt to situate my findings within the larger study of memory and the complexities of "writing trauma."² I inevitably had to make selections for which components of the Vichy Syndrome to address, both for clarity's sake and because the French memory of modern conflicts and traumas extends into more issues than I can discuss in a single thesis.

As a result, it is important to define the Vichy Syndrome as Rousso envisions it and explain how this "syndrome" is treated within the framework of this thesis. He describes it as a national French obsession with the memory of France's Vichy and Occupation period and argues that this obsession began in the 1970s and 1980s and continues to this day.³ The Syndrome does not let this past pass because of the guilt or the

¹ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Pierre Nora, ed., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), vol. 1.

² Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

³ Eric Conan and Henry Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard/Pluriel, 2013).

culpability French citizens and the French government feel for all that occurred during the era of the Vichy Regime between 1940 and 1944. This guilt led to the creation and popularization of the idea of a *devoir de mémoire*, or duty to remember. The Syndrome encompasses this obsession, guilt, and “duty to remember” in addition to later public events and commemorations that have occurred as a result of these factors. Such events include the trials of collaborators forty and fifty years after the fall of Vichy, the creation of museums and memorials, commemorative ceremonies, discovery of new sources dealing with the period, and the call for the “liberation” of archives—essentially all the *lieux de mémoire* of the period. In the following work, I do not address all the activities that result from the Syndrome that Roussio describes, but focus on the concepts of obsession, guilt, *devoir de mémoire*, and the resulting over-commemoration in official recognitions. I ignore the wider debates about the use of archives and the role of the historian. I also focus on the Syndrome solely within the context of the Holocaust in France, ignoring other historical groups, figures, and events like Pétain and the French Resistance. To show the influence of the Vichy Syndrome, however, I also discuss how the commemoration of other injustices toward Algerians differs from the memory of Holocaust victims. The contrasting memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War suggest the significance of the perspectives that Roussio has developed.

Walking around Paris, it is hard to avoid the repetitive commemoration of the Vichy period. Depending on the neighborhood, one might see one or more of the following on nearly every block: monuments, museums, plaques outside every primary school, streets named for tragic events or well-known victims and heroes, and gardens dedicated to the same. And one finds this not only in the city of light, but around the

entire nation though perhaps not quite to the same extent as in Paris. In addition, these tangible sites do not exhaust the commemoration of the Vichy period, as other memorial experiences of the past can also be “sites” of memory; Roussio documents four “carriers” of memory: official, like those listed above as well as official ceremonies; organizational, meaning “organizations” or groups that “[preserve] and [unify] the personal memories of group members”; cultural, which include literature, art, and other media; and scholarly, meaning works created by scholars within an academic context.⁴ Pierre Nora does not refer specifically to Roussio’s Vichy Syndrome, but he essentially defines all of these “carriers” of memory, as *lieux de mémoire*. *Lieux de mémoire* are “fundamentally vestiges, the ultimate embodiments of a commemorative consciousness that survives in a history which, having renounced memory, cries out for it.”⁵ They can be any number of tangible and intangible things that result from a “will to remember,” like “museums, archives, cemeteries, collections, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, [and] private associations.”⁶ To analyze the wide influence of the Vichy Syndrome, I turn to specific *lieux de mémoire* as essentially case studies in the changing relationship between history and memory. As Pierre Nora states on this changing, or rather already changed, relationship: “...during the upheavals of the modern world, experienced so acutely by France, a decisive shift was under way, from an awareness of self in history to an awareness of self in memory...[this transformation] has permitted, justified, and even necessitated systematic research into the *lieux* and the

⁴ Roussio, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 219-221.

⁵ Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 1:6.

⁶ Ibid., 6 & 14.

symbols of identity.”⁷ This kind of research into sites of memory thus provides the foundation for my analysis of how the French have remembered traumatic events that took place between the 1930s and the 1970s.

At the end of Rousso’s *Vichy Syndrome*, he asks if the Vichy Syndrome is a “hereditary” and “incurable” disease. Perhaps this is true, so that over time it just “diffuses” again and again—as he describes how it did over several decades after the war. It diffuses not only in the different ways it affects the different social groups that were most directly or indirectly involved in that period of history, but also in its affects on those involved in other particularly traumatic periods of French history; it permeates the memory of other past events. After Vichy, for example, what is more traumatic and controversial in modern French history than the events and memories of the Algerian War? Vichy and the Occupation occupy a particular space—and a large one, at that—in the French memory, which means that its “Syndrome” can alter or distort memories of other painful events, especially those of the Algerian War.

The consequences of the Vichy Syndrome are particularly important for memories of the Algerian War not simply because one could classify this conflict as France’s greatest postwar trauma, but also because some of the injustices during the Algerian War took place in specific historical spaces where the World War II-era oppression of Jews occurred. The recognition of these overlapping historical spaces was new to me, though connections between the groups interned in these *lieux* are not entirely new to the study of France, Algeria, and memory and history; in an interview with Yad Vashem in 1998, Dominick LaCapra acknowledged the link between “Vichy” and the Algerian War stating

⁷ Pierre Nora, ed., *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de mémoire*, trans. Mary Trouille (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1:xxi.

that “the French concern with Vichy is a way of displacing anxiety about Algeria and its aftermath.”⁸ In his work *Multidirectional Memory*, Michael Rothberg also posited that “the Holocaust has played a crucial role in response to [the 1961 massacre of Algerians in France] *from the very start*,” and that “the practice of torture and the use of detention camps by France in its war against the Algerian independence movement provided triggers that stimulated remembrance of the Nazi occupation and genocide.”⁹ Jim House and Neil MacMaster also noted the similarities between the round up of Jews in 1942 during the famous rafle du Vélodrome d’Hiver and the 1961 massacre of Algerians in Paris.¹⁰ Thus I am not the first to note these links and differences in French historical memories, but the connections are still a fairly new realization on the part of historians; and there has been very little in-depth research on the specific relationship between Algeria and Vichy.

To further explore the Vichy Syndrome and its manifestations, I have therefore focused on various *lieux de mémoire* that are shared between Algerian War-related events and Vichy and Occupation events, specifically those tied to Jewish and Algerian internments. In the first chapter, I set out to determine the present state of the Vichy Syndrome—noting an obsession and guilt that results in what Rousso calls “over-commemoration” in regards to Jewish internment. Two *lieux de mémoire* make up the foundation for this chapter: the Camp des Milles and the Camp de Drancy. Both of these places became sites of national commemoration in 2012, revealing the contemporary

⁸ LaCapra, *Writing History*, 171.

⁹ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 228; see chapter two of my thesis for further information on the 1961 massacre.

¹⁰ Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 34; see chapter two of my thesis for further information on the rafle du Vélodrome d’Hiver.

continuation of the Vichy Syndrome. The first chapter describes the history of how these places near Paris and in southern France developed into Jewish internment camps and then tracks the changes in their later official commemorations. I analyze changing French identifications with and feelings of responsibility for the Vichy and Occupation period from the beginning of the Vichy Syndrome to the present and shed light on the contemporary condition of the Vichy Syndrome as it relates to the specific period for which it was named.

The second chapter examines two events, the rafle du Vélodrome d'Hiver and the 1961 massacre of Algerians in Paris, that share one location—the Vélodrome d'Hiver—and an important historical figure—Maurice Papon. Firstly, this chapter covers the histories of these two events and notes their similarities. Secondly, it discusses the two trials of Maurice Papon. In the first trial, he was charged with crimes against humanity for his role in the deportation of Jews, and in the second, Papon himself brought a defamation suit against historian Jean-Luc Einaudi shortly after Papon's trial for crimes against humanity trial. In this later trial, the legal arguments focused on Einaudi's public statement that Papon killed hundreds of Algerians during the 1961 massacre. Lastly, this chapter examines the official commemoration of the rafle and the massacre. Through analysis of these three different phases in the history of *lieux de mémoire*, I intend to discover how other memories, specifically those related to the Algerian War, can complicate the Vichy Syndrome and French commemorations of the persecution of Jews during World War II.

The third and final chapter looks at one site—the Camp Joffre de Rivesaltes. This camp in southern France interned various groups of people, including Jews during World War

II and Algerians both during and after the Algerian War. The chapter expands the examples in earlier chapters by presenting an historical overview of the camp and then analyzing the commemoration of the site as a conflicted *lieu de mémoire* due to its historical associations for two different groups. The Vichy Syndrome led to its recognition as place of Jewish internment, and these connections with the Holocaust complicate the other events that happened there and the memories of other persecuted groups. In this last chapter, I identify the difficulties that the Vichy Syndrome can pose for non-Vichy, non-Occupation memories and different identities, especially among French-Algerians. It is important to note that this chapter does not mean to evaluate this camp through the lens of comparative victimhood, something that historians should avoid. I simply mean to evaluate the complicating effects that the Vichy Syndrome has on historical memories among various social groups that share a common memory site. The goal of this thesis as a whole is to describe and analyze the complexities of Henry Rousso's important concept of a Vichy Syndrome, and I use the history of memory to better understand how both national identities and more specific group identities have evolved through the events and commemorations of traumatic experiences. The French history of memory and forgetting suggests broader patterns in the construction of modern collective identities, for all nations struggle with confrontation of traumas in their own histories as they simultaneously attempt to maintain unity.

Camp des Milles and Camp de Drancy: The Vichy Syndrome and contemporary collective commemoration

This first chapter contextualizes and analyzes the contemporary situation of the Vichy Syndrome in France by examining two sites: the Camp des Milles in southern France and Camp de Drancy in a Parisian suburb. These two camps now share a similar historical role because they both have large, curated memorial sites as of September 2012, when memorials were inaugurated within 11 days of each other.¹ Their main difference lies in their historical administration during World War II—the Camp des Milles was a Vichy, “free zone” internment camp and Drancy was a Nazi, occupied zone internment camp run by French police. The first two sections of this chapter examine the histories of these sites, specifically during their time as places of Jewish internment. The final sections examine commemoration of the sites and demonstrate their significance for Henry Rousso’s concept of a “Vichy Syndrome” by showing how it has yet to come to end.

I. Le Camp des Milles: The Three Phases of Internment

Not long after the war began in 1939, France created “camps de rassemblement,” where they interned “enemy subjects.”² These “enemy subjects” were mainly German and Austrian immigrants, citizens, and expatriates.³ A great majority of these individuals were Jewish, having fled the Reich because of anti-Semitic policies, or non-Jews who

¹ François Béguin, *Le Monde*, 12 September 2012; Scott Sayare, *The New York Times*, 21 September 2012.

²² Marcel Cohen et al., *Les Camps en Provence : exil, internement, déportation, 1933-1944* (Aix-en-Provence : Editions Alinéa et L.L.C.G., 1984), in André Fontaine’s chapter “L’Internement au Camp des Milles et dans ses annexes: Septembre 1939-Mars 1943,” 106; La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial du Camp des Milles-comprendre pour demain” (Aix-en-Provence: Exprimer, 2012), 6.

³³ La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial,” 6.

generally disagreed with Hitler's politics.⁴ Essentially, one could classify many of them as political refugees. The French government, however, saw them only as a security threat to the nation and therefore interned them in these camps de rassemblement. The Camp des Milles, located in the south of France just outside of Aix-en-Provence, was one such camp for a time, opening in September of 1939. The first group of internees arrived at the former tile factory on September 7th and the camp closed as a camp de rassemblement just over seven months later in late April 1940.⁵ French authorities subsequently transferred the internees from the former tiler to a former canning factory in Lambesc, another small town in Aix-en-Provence.



Front view of the tile factory known as the Camp des Milles in les Milles, France. (Photo my own, June 2013)

⁴ Robert Mencherini, *Provence-Auschwitz: De l'internement des étrangers à la déportation des juifs (1939-1944)* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2007), in Mencherini's chapter, "De la galaxie des Milles aux rafles de juifs en Provence," 16.

⁵ Cohen et al., *Les Camps en Provence*, 108 & 120.

During the first phase of its history as an internment camp, the Camp des Milles housed many famous figures. Prominent among them was the German-Jewish writer Lion Feuchtwanger, ironically famous at that time for his work *Jud Süß*, which the Nazis appropriated and made into an anti-Semitic film. Other well-known internees included: artist Hans Bellmer; artist “Wols”, or Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze; artist Max Ernst; author Walter Benjamin; Nobel Prize winning scientist Otto Meyerhof; Nobel Prize winner and inventor of Cortisone, Thadeus Reichstein; son of Thomas Mann, Golo Mann; and first violinist of the Vienna Philharmonic at the time, Fritz Brunner.⁶ Historian André Fontaine wrote of the unhygienic conditions of the camp, and noted the irony of these conditions when several of the internees were doctors, including two—Meyerhof and Reichstein—who won the Nobel Prize for their advancements in the medical field.⁷ Lion Feuchtwanger wrote an autobiographical novel about his time at the Camp des Milles, called *Der Teufel in Frankreich*, or *The Devil in France*, in which he describes the terrible conditions internees like himself suffered between September 1939 and April 1940.

Not only did they have substandard healthcare, they had very little access to water and the food was insufficient. Feuchtwanger wrote: “Water was scarce, and camp authorities themselves affirmed that in the entire tillery, only a single tap produced drinkable water, and even that water seemed dubious to [the internees].”⁸ Everyday, they

⁶ Ibid., 115-116 and 118-119, André Fontaine includes a more comprehensive list of well-known internees in these pages, as well as in his work *Le Camp d'étrangers des Milles 1939-1940* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1989); La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial,” 15.

⁷ Cohen et al., *Les Camps en Provence*, 109.

⁸ Lion Feuchtwanger, *Le Diable en France*, trans. Jean-Claude Capèle (Paris: Belfond, 2010), 39.

ate with the same unclean aluminum utensils and bowls.⁹ They received a decent amount of food at the time—the same amount as the soldiers, which included around 370 g of meat each day.¹⁰ However, they ate mostly starches rather than a variety of foods, leading to nutrient and vitamin deficiencies.¹¹ This food was often covered in dust and dirt as a result of the earthen floors and the brick dust from the tile factory. According to Feuchtwanger, some of the internees often cited *Faust* at mealtimes: “[You] will eat the dust, and with an art.”¹² Ironically enough, the internees put on a production of *Faust* at the camp under the direction of Friedrich Schramm.¹³ They also lived in cramped, crowded conditions and had limited access to toilets. There were seven latrines, and at any given time, there were lines of at least ten internees waiting in front of each one.¹⁴ Many internees resorted to urinating in any corner near the latrines because they could not wait any longer. Thus, “this entire area of the camp,” right in the middle of the picturesque French provincial countryside, “resembled a swamp.”¹⁵ God and the Devil lived in France together at this time, side by side, as Feuchtwanger shows in his account.

With the establishment of the Vichy regime in June of 1940, the camp reopened, this time as an official internment camp, not a “camp de rassemblement” that generally functioned as an internment camp but under a different name.¹⁶ The French government of the “Free zone” imprisoned *indésirables* at this camp and many others.¹⁷ Jews, both

⁹ Ibid., 77.

¹⁰ Cohen et al., *Les Camps en Provence*, 110.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Feuchtwanger, *Le Diable en France*, 77.

¹³ André Fontaine, *Le Camp d'étrangers des Milles 1939-1943 (Aix-en-Provence)* (Aix-en-Provence : Edisud, 1989), 56.

¹⁴ Ibid., 65.

¹⁵ Ibid., 66-67.

¹⁶ La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial,” 6.

¹⁷ Ibid.

French and not, made up a large part of this “undesirable” category, along with immigrants from all across Europe that found themselves within French borders. The Vichy regime interned many of the same individuals previously interned by the French Republic, including Lion Feuchtwanger, but for different reasons; the French Republic interned them because of their German or other Axis-power nationalities while the Vichy regime interned most of them because of their “othered” identity as purely immigrants—non-French—or Jews.¹⁸ Both governments, however, named and defined these groups as enemies of the state. For the Vichy regime, painting these groups as threats to the nation legitimized their decisions to arrest and intern them—something simple hate, anti-Semitism, and racism alone could not justify.

During this second phase, les Milles operated as a transit camp.¹⁹ Vichy police arrested undesirables and took to them to the camp where they stayed until transportation arrived to take them back to their supposed countries of origin.²⁰ Thus, the Vichy regime sent many individuals back to the same nations they recently fled due to persecution. Beyond Eastern, Southern, and Central Europeans, this second phase group included Spanish immigrants who wanted to escape Franco’s dictatorial rule.²¹ The camp housed anywhere between 800 and 1400 people during this phase, which lasted from July 1940 to July 1942. The majority were men between the ages of 15 and 65. Women and children numbered less than thirty some months and up to approximately 350 during

¹⁸ Some of those interned were actual “threats” to the regime as active resisters and political dissenters, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion. The majority, however, were these social “undesirables.”

¹⁹ La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial,” 6.

²⁰ Mencherini, *Provence-Auschwitz*, 19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

others.²² Many worked in *Groupes de travailleurs étrangers* (GTE), or “groups of foreign workers,” which the Vichy regime exploited for free manual labor, using them in the mining, forestry, agricultural, and industrial sectors. The government often detained internees who procured visas to other non-Axis countries so that they could continue to use them to this end.²³

Prisoners during this period suffered even worse conditions than those interned in les Milles when it operated as a camp de rassemblement. It was more crowded and the internees received less food. They now received 250 grams of bread, 2 grams of fat, 2-3 grams of sugar, and 15 grams of meat per day.²⁴ Due to crowded conditions, multiple people lived in each of the tiler’s former brick ovens.²⁵ The internees called them “catacombs”—*die Katakombe*—because they were cramped, almost completely devoid of all light, and cold.²⁶ As a result of unhygienic conditions, vermin infested the camp and many people fell ill. At least one person committed suicide—a man named Walter Hasenclever, who wrote his autobiography before he died, which he called *Die Rechtslosen*, literally translating to “rights or liberty-less”, perhaps better translated as “the oppressed”.²⁷

The situation worsened and more people took their lives as the camp entered a new phase and became a deportation camp in August of 1942, less than a month after the well-known “rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv” in the occupied zone—a large “round-up” of Jews in

²² Ibid., 20-21.

²³ Ibid., 22-23.

²⁴ Fontaine, *Le Camp d’étrangers des Milles*, 104.

²⁵ Ibid., 227.

²⁶ Galerie d’Art, Espace 13, *Des Peintres au Camp des Milles, septembre 1939-été 1941: Hans Bellmer, Max Ernst, Robert Liebknecht, Leo Marschütz, Ferdinand Springer, Wols* (Aix-en-Provence: Actes Sud, 1997), 25.

²⁷ Ibid., 12.

Paris that the Vichy regime helped plan.²⁸ The camp changed to a site of deportation due to the Bousquet-Knochen agreement between Vichy and the Reich that stated that the Vichy police would round up and hand over 10,000 Jews to the Germans.²⁹ On August 9th and 10th, the French police separated the 72 children internees aged 2 to 18 years from their parents and transported—not deported—they to other places nearby.³⁰ Laval declared a month earlier that they should also deport children, which the government put into action only a few days after this separation at les Milles.³¹

Later in the afternoon of the 10th, the police ordered all internees whose last names began with any letter between A through H to assemble in the courtyard, numbering 262 in total.³² There they waited for hours. Many fainted and sixteen people attempted suicide.³³ Two succeeded, including one woman who jumped out of a third floor window with her two babies in her arms.³⁴ After several hours of standing in the late summer sun, the police forced the internees onto the train waiting to deport them, pushing them with the butts of their rifles.³⁵ They spent all night in the stationary train in these cramped conditions with only one pitcher of water per car and a “slop bucket” in which to relieve themselves.³⁶ The train left les Milles at 8:00 am the next morning. More left the camp in train cars the next day, and 542 followed on the 13th of August.³⁷ This continued throughout August and into September, when the camp ceased its operation as

²⁸ See the next chapter for more details on the rafle du Vél' d'Hiv.

²⁹ Serge Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz: Le rôle de Vichy dans la Solution finale de la question juive en France-1942* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), 90.

³⁰ Fontaine, *Le Camp d'étrangers des Milles*, 143-144.

³¹ Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz*, 140.

³² Fontaine, *Le Camp d'étrangers des Milles*, 230.

³³ *Ibid.*, 144-145.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 145.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 145 & 231.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 147 & 231.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

a site of deportation.³⁸ Most of the over 2,000 people who left les Milles in train cars did not survive, ending up at Auschwitz after brief stints at the French camps in Drancy and/or Rivesaltes.³⁹ A few internees successfully hid themselves in the tilery and escaped deportation with the help of local French citizens.⁴⁰ The last of the prisoners not deported in August and September left les Milles for other places in December 1942.⁴¹ After the war, the same tilery that saw such horrors reopened as a factory, as if nothing happened.⁴²

II. Le Camp de Drancy: The Two, or Three, Phases of Internment

Before receiving internees from les Milles and before its operation as an internment camp, the Drancy site—located in the Drancy suburb of Paris—was meant to be something commendable. Architects Eugène Beaudouin and Marcel Lods created the *Cité de la Muette*, as it was called, as part of the Republic’s attempt to provide comfortable, hygienic living arrangements for the working class, inspired by Ebenezer Howard’s “garden city” movement.⁴³ They built *cité de la Muette*, or “silent city”, between 1931 and 1935 for workers as an affordable escape from the noisy, dirty inner city.⁴⁴ Beginning in September 1939, its function took a sinister turn as the Republic requisitioned it and used the buildings for the internment of communists up until May 1940.⁴⁵ In June 1940, the Germans invaded Paris and used the *cité de la Muette* as a military barracks and transit point for French and British prisoners of war.⁴⁶

³⁸ La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial,” 7.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Fontaine, *Le Camp d’étranger des Milles*, 145.

⁴¹ La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial,” 7.

⁴² Oliver Bertrand, “Camp des Milles: ‘Parti sans laisser d’adresse’”, *Libération*, 10 July 2012.

⁴³ Annette Wieviorka and Michel Laffitte, *A l’Intérieur du Camp de Drancy* (Paris: Perrin, 2012), 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

One year later on the 20 August 1941, the site became the camp de Drancy—an internment camp for Jews and immigrants in the occupied zone.⁴⁷ From August 20 to 25, the French police arrested 5784 people and sent 4230 of them to Drancy.⁴⁸ French policemen, not Nazi troops, committed this act and were also in charge of the camp.⁴⁹ So began Drancy’s first phase as a *camp de représailles*, or “reprisal camp”—reprisal here referring to the idea that the imprisoned individuals wronged the state and therefore, as an act of reprisal, the French and Germans interned them. This period lasted from August 1941 to June 1942.⁵⁰ Internees stayed at the *cité de la Muette* for varying lengths of time—hours, days, weeks, a few months—before trains took them to other French internment camps like Beaune-la Rolande, Gurs, or Compiègne.⁵¹ Thus, it functioned primarily as a transit camp during this period.

Though the site’s original intent was to provide comfortable and hygienic living arrangements for its inhabitants, the camp resembled anything but this vision. The Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France reported on 20 November 1941 that the internees had to sleep on the reinforced concrete floors with pieces of wood as pillows. A few weeks later, they received beds, but without mattresses.⁵² Each day, prisoners received one small cup of black coffee as their breakfast, cold vegetable soup for lunch

⁴⁷ Serge Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier de la persecution des juifs de France 1940-1944* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), 1:183. My own translation from French. For the original German of texts written by Nazi officers, see Serge Klarsfeld’s *Die Endlösung der Judenfrage in Frankreich; Deutsche Dokumente 1941-1944* (Paris: Klarsfeld, 1977).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:183-184.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:184.

⁵⁰ Wieviorka and Laffitte, *A l’Intérieur*, 9.

⁵¹ Maurice Rajsfus, *Drancy: Un camp de concentration très ordinaire 1941-1944* (Paris: le cherche midi éditeur, 1996), 143.

⁵² Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier*, 1: 268.

and dinner, and 200 grams of bread.⁵³ Many individuals lost a significant amount of weight during their time at Drancy. One person reported weighing 56 kilograms, or approximately 123 pounds, when she arrived, and left weighing a mere 39 kilograms, or approximately 86 pounds.⁵⁴ Starvation was a serious issue for the camp during this time, especially during the fall of 1941. The meager food internees received often caused them to fall ill; one source reported 600 cases of dysentery at one time, resulting from the consumption of unwashed vegetables.⁵⁵ La Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France also reported 600 cases of vitamin deficiency, listed 300 cases of tuberculosis, and detailed the lack of proper medical provisions including basic medications like aspirin and space for the sick—the infirmary consisted of only five stalls at that time.⁵⁶ A great many other internees suffered from edema, which afflicted over 400 in November 1941.⁵⁷ Apart from living alongside all of these sick, the internees experienced other hygiene issues, like women’s inability to use the bathroom facilities as needed due to a rule that only allowed groups of 10 women to use them at a time, meaning each woman could use an actual bathroom once every 36 hours since the camp housed thousands of internees.⁵⁸

Some committed suicide out of desperation. A Jewish doctor at the camp “put an end to his days with phenobarbitone,” while another person threw himself out of a fifth floor window.⁵⁹ Yet another tried to commit suicide by way of slitting the veins on his wrist, and some prisoners died not of their own accord, but of starvation due to an

⁵³ Rajsfus, *Drancy*, 51.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵⁶ Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier*, 1:270-271.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:262.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:538-539.

⁵⁹ Rajsfus, *Drancy*, 57.

insufficient amount of food.⁶⁰ The guards and camp officials mistreated the interned, especially the French, who almost exclusively controlled and directed the camp themselves, despite its operation under Nazi rule. One person stated that it was often hard to determine where “German brutality” started and “French severity” left off,” while another stated, “The most severe were the French. The Germans simply carried out their orders, nothing more.”⁶¹ The French police mistreated women, in particular, often sexually harassing and assaulting them during frisking and interrogations.⁶² Head of the Sicherheitspolizei in occupied Paris, Helmut Knochen, lauded Frenchmen’s willingness to help accomplish Germany’s Final Solution goals during his trial in 1954, stating: “It is not the 2000 [German] officers at my disposal that would have allowed me to take France. It is because the police, the gendarmerie, and the French justice system helped me that I could accomplish the task ahead.”⁶³

All of these factors led many internees who experienced Nazi concentration camps prior to their internment at the *cité de la Muette* to say that Drancy was more brutal than Dachau, or that “Dachau was a paradise compared to Drancy.”⁶⁴ Animosity between “French” Jews and “foreigners” or “immigrants” further worsened the situation. Some French Jews, according to a prisoner, saw themselves as “superior” to other, non-French internees.⁶⁵ Another told of how they blamed the “foreigners” there for their problems, refused to fraternize with them, and believed that French Jews would soon be

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 84.

⁶² Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier*, 1:577.

⁶³ Rajsfus, *Drancy*, 83.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 66 and 86; Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier*, 1:272.

⁶⁵ Rajsfus, *Drancy*, 67.

liberated.⁶⁶ In December of 1941, the French population at Drancy numbered 1046, followed closely by the Polish who made up 989 of the total.⁶⁷ As the camp moved into its second phase, the imprisoned population included some famous figures, including Max Jacob, a well-known French poet and painter who was a close friend of Picasso. Compared to the Camp des Milles, the list of the famous interned at Drancy was quite small. The number of people who went through Drancy at some point, however, regardless of social status, was much greater than the Camp des Milles ever saw.

During the second phase, which never truly ended until the liberation of the camp, Drancy operated as a site of deportation. A total of 80,000 Jews passed through the camp and 67,073 of the 75,000 Jews deported from France to German concentration camps, primarily Auschwitz, left by trains from the station at Drancy.⁶⁸ Less than three percent of those deported from the camp survived to see the end of the war.⁶⁹ The first convoy left the *cité de la Muette* on March 27th, 1942.⁷⁰ From this date until August 1944, the camp frequently received thousands of Jews from other French camps. This included trains full of children aged 2 to 18 who arrived in miserable states, infected with ringworm and scabies, and many could not walk. A Jewish doctor at the camp remembered their arrival and his attempts to help them by giving them what blankets they could find, only to discover the next morning that the adult internees had stolen them from the children.⁷¹ On the trains deporting Jews to concentration camps, these children traveled in livestock cars in the company of the elderly, the disabled, and the sick with

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 76-77.

⁶⁸ Wieviorka and Laffitte, *A l'Intérieur*, 8; Rajsfus, *Drancy*, 365.

⁶⁹ Rajsfus, *Drancy*, 13.

⁷⁰ Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier*, 1:345.

⁷¹ Ibid., 740-741.

fevers of 102 degrees Fahrenheit or less.⁷² Among those deported children were those rounded up by Klaus Barbie, the “Butcher of Lyon”, from the famous “maison d’enfants” in Izieu.⁷³

Though this second phase lasted until liberation, historians Annette Wieviorka and Michel Laffitte identify a third phase, in which they say Drancy operated as a concentration camp from July 1943 to August 1944.⁷⁴ They see the appointment of SS Hauptsturmführer Alois Brunner to the camp’s position of director in July 1943 as Drancy’s transition from a “transit camp” to a “concentration camp.” Brunner had previously served the Reich in Vienna, Berlin, and Thessaloniki, in all of which his job was to direct the deportation of tens of thousands of Jews to concentration camps across Europe.⁷⁵ The reforms he made resulted in a system of discipline much like those of concentration camps, according to Wieviorka and Laffitte.⁷⁶ This is quite a provocative statement, and other historians like Maurice Rajsfus believe it should be further explored as a component of the site’s commemoration. Regardless of whether the camp had two or three phases, it operated largely as a transit and deportation camp for the entirety of its existence. The camp closed on 18 August 1944, when it was liberated.⁷⁷ Acting on his extreme dedication to the Final Solution, Brunner organized deportation up until the very day before liberation. Shortly thereafter it ironically became a site of internment for

⁷² Ibid., 945.

⁷³ Klaus Barbie, letter to the SS Commandant, 6 April 1944, in Serge Klarsfeld’s *Die Endlösung der Judenfrage*, 223.

⁷⁴ Wieviorka and Laffitte, *A l’Intérieur*, 215.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 218.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 243.

⁷⁷ Serge Klarsfeld, *Le Calendrier de la persécution des juifs de France: 1940-1944* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), 2:1897.

collaborators, and after the war it resumed its original use as low-income, urban housing, again, as with the Camp des Milles, like nothing happened.⁷⁸

III. Complicating the “devoir de mémoire”: Commemoration of the Camp de Drancy

There is no denying that Drancy was a terrible place; one internee appropriately called it the “antechamber of death.”⁷⁹ Yet for many years, France denied the camp’s existence as a site of French collaboration with the Nazis in the Final Solution. Instead, the state chose to remember it falsely as a place where Germans mistreated and deported French citizens, never originally recognizing that the victims were mostly Jews.⁸⁰ The French did, however, decide to call it a “concentration camp” as soon as the war ended, officially defining it as such in the *Petit Robert* and inscribing it in a commemorative plaque placed in one of the building’s stairwells.⁸¹ This plaque has a rather general inscription that avoids description of the interned, stating: “In this place, a concentration camp functioned from 1941 to 1944.”⁸² The state added others beside it by 1951, specifically dedicated to French prisoners of war that the Nazis assembled in the site’s courtyard to await deportation between June 1940 and August 1941.⁸³ Here they identified internees as more than French—as French soldiers—but again refused to recognize the internees from August 1941 to June 1944 as mostly Jewish.

In 1965, the mayor of the Drancy suburb decided that the town should erect a “monument to the memory of the deported victims of Nazism who died after their

⁷⁸ Wieviorka and Laffitte, *A l’Intérieur*, 309 & 316.

⁷⁹ Rajsfus, *Drancy*, 378.

⁸⁰ Wieviorka and Laffitte, *A l’Intérieur*, 329 and 330.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 330-331.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 330.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

internment at the Drancy camp.”⁸⁴ Here again it was not made clear that the majority of these victims were Jewish and interned because of their ethno-religious identity. However, the committee set up to choose the artist for the project selected a Jewish sculptor who created a monument full of Jewish symbolism, imagery, and language, showing a progression towards greater recognition of the site and all that occurred there. The artist, Shelomo Selinger, made the sculpture in such a way that “the three blocks at the paved base [of the monument] formed the Hebrew letter *shin* [ש]”—a letter that stands for “Shaddai”, or God. This letter is traditionally “engraved on mezuzah” which Jews place by the doors of their homes.⁸⁵ The two opposing blocks that surround the central block represent the “doorway to death,” and the *shin* operates like a mezuzah, marking the entrance to this doorway.⁸⁶ The central block is a tangled mass of 10 individuals—the number of individuals “necessary for collective prayer (*minyan*).”⁸⁷ One of the figures wears a *tefillin*, or phylactery, symbolizing prayer, and two of the figures whose heads are reversed symbolize death. A shoulder, arm, and beard of two people form the Hebrew letters *lamed* and *vav*, which translate to the number 36, the number of “Justes parmi les Nations,” who were individuals recognized for saving Jews from internment, deportation, and death in France.⁸⁸ On one of the blocks, Selinger inscribed:

“August 20th, 1941, 5,000 Jews were arrested in Paris and assembled in this place, inaugurating the Drancy camp, antechamber of the death camps. Nearly 100,000 Jews—men, women, children, and the elderly—were interned here before the majority of them were deported to Auschwitz. Only 1,518 returned. 256 were executed as hostages. This monument testifies to the Jewish martyrs of France,

⁸⁴ Ibid., 332.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 335.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 336.

victims of Nazi barbarism. When you pass by, take a moment of silence and remember [*n'oubliez pas*].”⁸⁹



Selinger's monument in the courtyard between the Drancy buildings that formerly housed many Jews awaiting deportation during World War II. (Photo my own, June 2013)

Selinger's note that the Nazis committed these acts shows the reluctance of the nation to admit France's culpability. The French were aware to some extent of citizens' roles in the internment of Jews and other “undesirables” by the time the committee selected Selinger and most certainly by its inauguration in 1976, so this was not inscribed out of ignorance but denial.⁹⁰ Selinger, a Holocaust survivor of nine different camps himself, very likely knew that the direction of the camp was mostly French and chose to

⁸⁹ Ibid., 335.

⁹⁰ See chapter two for more on the development of official recognition during the 1970s, especially information about the presidential pardon of Touvier, a Frenchman involved in the deportation of Jews. It was in this decade that the Vichy Syndrome began, according to Rousoo. Some, though not complete, discussion of the French role in the Holocaust made headlines and therefore the French citizenry knew about the nation's involvement in the genocide to some extent by 1976.

omit this fact because of his work's audience.⁹¹ The French political culture was not ready at this point to completely accept French involvement in the persecution of Jews.

In February of 1993, the French made their first step towards recognition of the state's involvement when the Union of Jewish Students of France placed a fifth plaque at the site that reads: "Here, the French State of Vichy interned several thousand Jews, gypsies, and foreigners. They were deported to Nazi camps where nearly all of them died. We, as a generation of remembrance, will never forget."⁹² Thus, the nation and its constituents officially recognized the role of Vichy in the Holocaust at this point, though the Vichy police was not actually present at this camp. Though in some ways it seemed a step towards complete recognition, in naming the Vichy regime as the perpetrator they attempted to separate the French Republic and its citizens from these events in order to escape blame for the many the postwar "Republican" citizens who were collaborators in the occupied and unoccupied zones during the war. Another example of this occurred in 1988, when the state's rail transportation organization (SNCF) donated a wagon like those previously used for deportations to Drancy's memorial site, which they decided to do as a gesture of remembrance following the trial of the infamous Nazi and "Butcher of Lyon," Klaus Barbie.⁹³ They meant it to represent Nazi atrocities, and not French ones, despite the SNCF's role in deporting those 67,073 individuals from the Drancy camp in train cars like the one they donated. The French public accused the organization of their complicity three years later in 1991, which the SNCF administration did not publicly admit until twenty years later in 2011.⁹⁴ This shows the continuing reluctance of many

⁹¹ Wieviorka and Laffitte, *A l'Intérieur*, 335.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 331.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 336.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 345.

French to confront the full reality of the country's traumatic Holocaust past, and shows the slow development of historical memory in regards to this past that evolves in French collective memory to this day.

The first large, official, nationalistic commemoration occurred on May 12th, 1992. This ceremony emphasized the reality that Drancy was a site of mainly Jewish internment, as seen by the choice to have students perform songs in Yiddish and Hebrew, in addition to some in French, as well as the majority of the speakers' identification as Jewish.⁹⁵ At the end of the ceremony, all attendees sang *la Marseillaise*—the French national anthem—and the SNCF train car was illuminated in blue, white, and red, like the French flag.⁹⁶ French citizens are supposed to pay their respects to the flag, especially during their national anthem, and by illuminating the train car in this way, French citizens were actively made to respect all the deported victims and the memory of the Holocaust.

The next large commemoration took place the next year on April 25th, 1993, the day after the “Journée nationale de la deportation,” a national day of remembrance created in 1954.⁹⁷ This time, the commemoration focused on the plight of communists interned there under the Republic—something the event did not acknowledge—from 1939 to 1940. The speakers present continuously affirmed the multitude of different groups interned and deported, stating that the “almost 100,000” internees at Drancy were Jews, gypsies, and foreigners.⁹⁸ Although it is true that some gypsies and non-Jewish foreigners were interned in the camp, they made up a very small percentage of the total. This seemed like a step backwards from the previous commemoration, which fully

⁹⁵ Ibid., 338.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 339.

realized the largely Jewish history of the camp. It was not a step back to a time when the internment and deportation of Jews were ignored or denied, but it did minimize the Jewish historical association to this camp, perhaps as an attempt unify citizens by refusing to focus mainly on one group of the population.

This commemorative service did recognize some French involvement in the arrests and deportations of Jews. However, the speakers falsely laid all the blame on the Vichy militia, stating that this militia of the unoccupied zone operated this camp located in the occupied zone.⁹⁹ The nation seemed to agree on a “devoir de mémoire”—a duty to remember—but its constituents did not seem to know how to go about it, especially without feeling as if they might complicate national unity and pride by highlighting serious wrongs committed by citizens of the Republic. They wanted to place the blame on someone or something other than themselves or their fellow citizens, and they named Vichy as firstly non-French to separate themselves from its actions and then, with this comfort in mind, claimed the regime as the responsible party.

Recognition of French culpability occurred in 1995 when Jacques Chirac publicly admitted the nation’s role at the commemoration of the rafle du Vél’ d’hiv.¹⁰⁰ Six years later in 2001, the *cit  de la Muette* became an officially protected site of national memory, saving it from modifications that might damage any traces of its years of operation as an internment camp.¹⁰¹ On September 21st, 2012, the President of the Republic, Fran ois Hollande, officially inaugurated the museum erected just across the

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ See the second chapter of this thesis for more information on the rafle du V l’ d’hiv and Chirac’s 1995 speech.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 341.

street from Selinger's monument and the SNCF train car.¹⁰² This marks the nation's most recent effort to deal with the troubled past that largely revolves around this particular site. A refusal to fully recognize French involvement in the internment and deportation of Jews at this specific site has left the French state with a guilty conscience. In response to this guilt, the state originally obsessively commemorated, hoping for closure. Closure did not occur because the French did not acknowledge the true extent of French involvement in the Holocaust, and thus the obsession continued. By 2012, France continued to feel guilty though it had largely been recognized that French citizens, not non-French Vichy entities, led the camp. This guilt developed out of the previous denial and the idea that the country has a *devoir de mémoire*.

A great deal of the difficulty in commemorating this specific site stems from the way France labeled it from the beginning—as a concentration camp, not simply an internment camp. As stated previously, historians Annette Wieviorka and Michel Laffitte define the three phases in the camp's history: transit camp, deportation camp, and concentration camp. Another historian and Holocaust survivor, Maurice Rajsfus, believes Drancy was both a concentration camp and deportation camp from the beginning.¹⁰³ Also, as mentioned above, the first plaque placed at the site called Drancy a “concentration camp,” stating little else. Calling the site a concentration camp made it especially difficult for the French to recognize their own hand in its operation because that would mean they were as “bad as the Nazis.” It would mean they actually carried out the Final Solution themselves, not simply that they sent Jews to the Nazis and then the Nazis carried out the Final Solution. Another point of difficulty comes from the facts of

¹⁰² Sayare, *The New York Times*.

¹⁰³ Rajsfus, *Drancy*.

the camp: it was the single largest site of Jewish deportation in France. The Vélodrome d'hiver may be the key symbolic site of the Holocaust in France in the French collective memory, but Drancy is truly the key historic site representative of the Holocaust in France. For these reasons, this site in particular continues the French over-commemoration of the Holocaust and the Vichy period, called the Vichy Syndrome by historian Henry Rousso. Psychologically, the over-commemoration symptomatic of the Syndrome is a result of the national guilt associated with the reality of French involvement and the attempt at denying this reality. Drancy shows this guilt and over-commemoration has yet to come to an end with the recent inauguration of a memorial museum dedicated to the camp's history and memory.

V. Selective commemoration and misplaced association: Commemoration of the Camp des Milles

From 1942 to 1982, France did not commemorate the Camp des Milles in any great capacity.¹⁰⁴ One might attribute this to the fact that throughout this period the site was privately owned and in a small city, unlike Drancy whose buildings are state-owned and located in a densely populated suburb of Paris. In 1982, the owner of the former camp planned to do some reconstructive work on the factory, which would include destroying a very important artistic remnant from the site's operation as a place of internment—the “Salle des peintures murales,” or the “Mural room.”¹⁰⁵ Jewish artists painted large-scale murals on the walls of this particular room during their internment. The Conseil Représentatif des Institutions juives de France and the mayor of the city-commune Aix-en-Provence that includes les Milles intervened to save these historic

¹⁰⁴ La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial,” 26.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

works of art by rushing the room's classification as an official historic monument of France.¹⁰⁶ It was not until 1985, however, that the community placed a plaque at the site commemorating the Jews interned there during World War II. This followed the creation of the "Comité de coordination pour la sauvegarde du Camp des Milles et la création d'un Musée mémorial de la Déportation, de la Résistance et de l'Internement"—the "coordinating committee for the conservation of the Camp des Milles and for the creation of a memorial Museum of Deportation, Resistance, and Internment."¹⁰⁷ This plaque states, like one of Drancy's, that the deportation of Jews occurred at the hands of the Vichy government. Unlike Drancy, this was true for the Camp des Milles. However, one could argue that it was again used as a way to avoid fully admitting that the people who committed these acts were French before, during, and after the war.

The next commemorative action occurred in 1992 when the SNCF donated a train car like those used to deport Jews to the site, which was placed by the plaque across the street from the actual camp.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the SNCF donated a train car to the Camp des Milles just as it did to the Camp de Drancy and, more significantly, they donated this particular wagon one year following public accusations of the organization's complicity in the deportation of Jews. The ceremony following the donation of the train car was quite a large event called "Mémoire pour demain"—"memory/remembrance for tomorrow."¹⁰⁹ During this event, thousands of students attended to engage in debate about the Holocaust, and to view films, plays, and exhibitions about it, as well. It was a large, all-day, nationalistic, educational experience to which most public school field trips

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

cannot compare. This is evidence of Rousso's Vichy Syndrome concept—a, what he might call, over-commemoration and over-teaching of this specific historical event and time period. No event like it occurred to teach students about other periods in French history. As with commemoration at Drancy, this event at les Milles seemed to function as an outlet for the guilt felt for French involvement in the event and, at this point in time, for the guilt that stemmed from a refusal to completely acknowledge this involvement.

In 1993, one year following “Mémoire pour demain”, the Salle des peintures murales opened to the public.¹¹⁰ Nearly ten years later in 2002, citizens established another organization to push for the creation of a memorial museum—the “Mémoire du Camp d'Aix-des-Milles.”¹¹¹ Two years after that in 2004, the entire factory and site of the former camp became an official historical monument, and over the next five years, the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah—the “Foundation for the memory of the Holocaust”—raised the funds necessary to purchase the site.¹¹² After they purchased it, another organization was created—the “Fondation du Camp des Milles- Mémoire et Education”—and three years later on September 10th, 2012, Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault inaugurated the “Site-Mémorial du Camp des Milles.”¹¹³

This memorial is particularly important because although the Camp des Milles was largely ignored in official memory until the 1980s, whereas other sites—namely Drancy and the Vélodrome d'Hiver—were officially commemorated via ceremony or plaques not long after the war ended, it was the first memorial museum in France

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 27.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.; Béguin, *Le Monde*.

dedicated to commemorating an internment camp.¹¹⁴ The Mémorial de la Shoah—the national Holocaust museum—opened only seven years prior. Perhaps one reason why the Vichy Syndrome developed over the 70s, 80s, 90s, and into the 2000s is because France had yet to provide victims with a *lieu de mémoire* where they could remember and mourn, and where others could learn about and from their struggles. Thus, the preoccupation with the Holocaust memory in France developed because this memory was so long effaced. In such a nationalistic country, *lieux de mémoire* are very important to national unity and national mourning. It makes sense that the French victims of the Holocaust would want their nation to recognize their struggle, and specifically the death of Jewish citizens, in the form of tangible sites when their nation places such great emphasis on memorials—like the “Tomb of the Unknown Soldier” under the Arc de Triomphe, Fort Mont Valérien, or the Panthéon. How could the Vichy Syndrome end without a final resting place for the French Holocaust dead, for the French Holocaust memory?

The Vichy Syndrome did not end with the creation of this site, however. Some sites act as places to leave the national memory of an event until the country is ready to pick it back up again on days of remembrance. This may be the case with events that fit more comfortably with the national narrative and that are long past, like World War I. However, one could argue that in some ways, there was a World War I Syndrome in France after the conflict ended, evident especially in post-World War I literature, and, in addition, that World War II distracted from mourning and remembrance and therefore one could not know how long the nation would have attempted to deal with this past.

¹¹⁴ Béguin, *Le Monde*. Inauguration of the Drancy museum followed that of les Milles 11 days later in 2012.

After all, the Great War was unlike anything the world had ever seen. Though the Holocaust and World War I cannot be truly compared, they are similar in that they remain difficult to comprehend because they were so destructive and so many people perished. The Holocaust was especially shocking; it seems impossible that the Nazis—and the French to some degree—could be capable of such acts. Thus, it is understandable that countries still struggle with the memory of it today. How *does* one deal with such a past? The Camp des Milles memorial asks such questions at the end of the museum tour in the “Volet réflexif”—“Reflective section.”¹¹⁵ Here, the nation tries to comprehend this past by using it as an example of what not to do, and showing that commemoration is important because through it, people can learn to resist repressive actions.

There exists a principal difference between commemorating a past like World War I in France and commemorating the Holocaust. World War I commemoration is not divisive like commemoration of the Holocaust in France. The Great War unifies all citizens against an oppressive force, while French persecution of Jews divides the nation because it goes against the core principles of the Republic—liberté, égalité, and fraternité for each and every citizen. France struggles with a paradox of desiring unity, explaining the original reluctance to admit the actions of Frenchmen against fellow citizens, and wanting to uphold its commitment to human rights for all people. Because of this paradox, sites related to divisive traumatic events like the Holocaust do not provide a “final resting place” for related memories. Such is the condition of the Vichy Syndrome. If it were to end, closure would not come from sites born of a guilty national conscience that does not allow for closure but in fact perpetuates obsessive remembrance. As Roussio states, France’s current Syndrome struggle that leads to over-commemoration is the

¹¹⁵ La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial,” 33.

nation's difficulty in accepting "that it must live with a rupture that no trial, commemoration or speech can redress."¹¹⁶

One important point to recognize in France's remembrance of the Camp des Milles, in particular, is the focus on the site's famous internees, most especially the artists. As explained in the section detailing the history of the camp, nearly all of these individuals were interned during the site's first phase as a *camp de rassemblement*, when the Republic interned enemies of the state from the fall of 1939 to the summer of 1940. In fact, all of the best-known artists—Hans Bellmer, Max Ernst, Robert Liebknicht, Leo Marschütz, Ferdinand Springer, and Wols—were interned solely during this period, not during its operation as an internment camp that connected it to the Holocaust.¹¹⁷ This is an interesting fact considering the museum's emphasis on these artists and their art as part of the Holocaust narrative in France. Their internment at les Milles and the art they created there do not represent the typical experiences of Jews in France and, more specifically, the purpose of this camp after the armistice between Vichy and the Reich. One wonders how commemoration would differ if these artists had not been interned there—would the museum even exist? After all, the first part of the site that France made an effort to save and declare an historical monument was the Salle des peintures murales. The art seemed, at least in the beginning, most important to the state, as opposed to remembrance of all internees' experiences there as a whole, by its original decision to claim it as historical, and not the entire site where atrocities actually occurred. That they would also choose to use this art in a way that attributes it to the camp's operation as a site implicated in the Final Solution complicates commemoration, as well. The art is

¹¹⁶ Henry Rousso, *The Haunting Past: History, Memory, and Justice in Contemporary France*, trans. Ralph Schoolcraft (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 71-72.

¹¹⁷ Galerie d'Art, Espace 13, *Des Peintres au Camp des Milles*.

moving and worth viewing, but it does not compare to the terrors other internees experienced after these artists left. This is a contemporary example of how the state has yet to fully commemorate the Holocaust in France in a way true to its history. The Vichy Syndrome has not ended, and may not considering the nation still has difficulties comprehending and explaining all that occurred not just from 1940 to 1944, but also internment under the Third Republic in 1939.

Rafles and Ratonnades: The Vichy Syndrome and Police Repression of Jews and Algerians

The first chapter showed that the Vichy Syndrome has yet to end by examining two camps recently christened as sites of memory—the Camp de Drancy and the Camp des Milles. This second chapter concerns two events—two intangible sites of memory that share a connection through one person. These two events are the “rafle du Vélodrome d’Hiver,” the infamous round-up of Jews in Paris by French police in 1942 that has garnered international attention in the last few years with the publication of Tatiana de Rosnay’s bestseller *Sarah’s Key*, and the “ratonnade d’octobre,” the infamous massacre of Algerians by French police during a peaceful protest in 1961. Maurice Papon, secretary general of the Gironde police prefecture during World War II and chief of the Parisian police during the Algerian War, gave direct orders in both instances that led to the killing of many innocent people and he organized both in similar ways. Despite these events’ similarities in execution, the French do not commemorate them in the same ways; the massacre is hardly commemorated while the rafle is constantly remembered. Through analysis of these two histories, the legal prosecution of Maurice Papon, and the commemoration of the events, this chapter will demonstrate how France’s failure to officially recognize the October massacre in fact perpetuates the over-commemoration of the rafle and the Vichy Syndrome, in general.

I. The Rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv

July 16, 1942, Paris, France, two days after the anniversary of the once-unified country’s Fête nationale. The “rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv” began before dawn in the arrondissements and banlieues of Paris. Starting at 4:00 AM, French policemen arrested

Jewish men, women, and children, forcing them from their homes onto buses that led them to the Vélodrome d'Hiver, a cycling race track just a few blocks from the Eiffel Tower. In his work *Paris, 1942: Chroniques d'un survivant*, Maurice Rajsfus, a French historian and survivor of the round-up, tells how police knocked on his family's door early that morning, telling them to pack their bags, constantly reminding them to "hurry up".¹ The policemen stopped at 9:30 AM, beginning again at 12:00 PM and ending the day at 3:30 PM. They started at 4:00 AM the following morning and continued to make arrests until 1:00 PM.

In only eighteen hours over two days, the French police rounded up—"raflé"—13,152 Jews.² Of these 13,152 people, only 3,118 of them were men. The majority were women (5,919) and children (4,115).³ The Director of the Municipal Police stated these figures in a letter to the Prefect of Police on 20 July 1942. His figures differed from those of S.S. officer Lischka from a few days earlier. Lischka recorded 12,884 arrests in a letter to the German Military Commander in France on 18 July.⁴ The French arrested so many people, that it seemed no one quite knew the exact number. Buses took these Jews to the Vélodrome d'Hiver. The police sent around 2,000 men and 3,000 women to Drancy, the internment camp in the Drancy suburb—or "banlieue"—of Paris, upon their arrival at the Vél' d'Hiv. The approximately 7,000 others remained at the track.⁵

¹ Maurice Rajsfus, *Paris, 1942: Chroniques d'un survivant* (Paris: Editions Noesis, 2002), 64.

² Hennequin, Director of the Municipal Police, letter to the Prefect of Police, 20 July 1942, in Serge Klarsfeld's *Le Calendrier de la persecution des juifs de France 1940-1944* (Paris : Fayard, 2001) 1:541-542.

³ Ibid.

⁴ S.S.-Obersturmbannführer Lischka, letter to the Military Commander in France, 18 July 1942, in *ibid.*, 1:533.

⁵ Hennequin, letter to the Prefect of Police, 20 July 1942, in *ibid.*, 1:541-542.

The Jews who did not go to Drancy immediately after arrival at the Vél' d'Hiv remained at the track for days. The French police planned to send 2,000 of them to the Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande internment camps by convoy between July 19 and 22.⁶ By 22 July, the Vélodrome d'Hiver was empty. The Cabinet of the Police Prefecture stated ironically, in retrospect, an hour before the last group of Jews left the track, "In about an hour the Vélodrome d'Hiver will be free."⁷ During these five days, internees lived in terrible conditions. Internee Ryfka-Régine Wolf-Rybak stated that for three days, she and her son did not eat or drink, and explained how people began to lose their minds.⁸ She specifically told of a woman who reposed undressed, thinking she was in her bedroom, ready to go to bed.⁹ A nurse phoned the Police Prefecture on 17 July, a mere one day after the arrival of the first groups of arrested Jews, requesting basic needs like blankets so people could sleep, basins for washing, and toilets, of which, she stated, the internees were in great need.¹⁰ Another person from an organization providing aid to the internees also contacted the Prefecture, alerting them of the situation at the Vél' d'Hiv on 18 July. He stated that "the Jews are beginning to be affected by their conditions. Women: epileptic and nervous seizures. Sick children. Clogged toilets. Internees attacking police. Low morale. The food promised has not arrived. No water. Not enough bread. Soup is

⁶ Hennequin, classified letter to the heads of the 5th and 6th arrondissements, the heads of roads in the 13th and 15th arrondissements, the heads of the banlieues, and directors of the engineering department and police, 18 July 1942, in *ibid.*, 1:537-538.

⁷ Cabinet of the Prefect, statement, 22 July 1942, in *ibid.*, 1:574.

⁸ Alain Vincenot, *Vel'd'Hiv: 16 juillet 1942* (Paris: L'Archipel, 2012), 205.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Cabinet of the Prefect, statement, 17 July 1942, in Klarsfeld's *Le Calendrier*, 1:524.

served for every meal. Only two doctors. It's raining inside the track."¹¹ Five people committed suicide by 20 July, and seven others attempted to do the same multiple times.¹²

The goal of this rafle was to arrest foreign Jews in Paris, namely Germans, Austrians, Poles, Czechs, and Russians, as part of the Final Solution. However, there was another category deemed fit for arrest, as well—people considered “apatrides,” which Hennequin, the Director of the Municipal Police, explained as those of “indeterminable nationality.”¹³ Exceptions to arrest included pregnant mothers that policemen thought might deliver soon, mothers who had children still breastfeeding, children less than two years old, wives of prisoners of war, widows whose former spouses were not Jews, those married to non-Jews whose union was “not Jewish,” French Jews, Jews of nationalities that differed from those listed, and Jews with at least one child who was not Jewish.¹⁴ These orders came from the Reich, but the French implemented them. In fact, Vichy officials Pierre Laval and René Bousquet even helped plan the arrests, though the round-up was to occur in the German-occupied zone and not the free zone.¹⁵ Given the large number of Jews arrested over such a short period of time, it is hard to believe that the police checked for all of the named exceptions. Ironically, after the war, the Vél d’hiv site housed collaborators awaiting trial, just like Drancy.¹⁶

¹¹ Cabinet of the Prefect, statement, 18 July 1942, in *ibid.*, 1:532.

¹² Hennequin, letter to the Prefect of Police, 20 July 1942, in *ibid.*, 1:541-542.

¹³ Hennequin, classified letter to the heads of Parisian arrondissements, the public roads, and banlieues, 13 July 1942, in *ibid.*, 1:495-496.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ SS-Sturmbannführer Hagen to the head of the S.S. in the occupied zone and the head of police, 4 July 1942, in Serge Klarsfeld’s *Die Endlösung der Judenfrage in Frankreich: Deutsche Dokumente 1941-1944* (Paris : Klarsfeld, 1977), 75-78.

¹⁶ Annette Wieviorka and Michel Laffitte, *A l’Intérieur du Camp de Drancy* (Paris: Perrin, 2012), 309.

The rafle du Vél' d'Hiv was a terrible event that remains a point of shame for the French to this day. However, only two presidents have officially recognized French involvement--Chirac and Hollande. All others blamed the rafle and its aftermath on Vichy, "L'Etat dit français." This is not to say that all French citizens supported these arrests and the internment of Jews; some citizens did speak out against it, but most did nothing to stop it, and a good number helped it happen. The French struggle with this memory today, as can be seen with their more recent choices to recall, remember, commemorate, and apologize constantly for such events. "The Vichy Syndrome" plagues France. The Vél' d'Hiv is part of a "past that does not pass," and is a trace of an "unachieved bereavement."¹⁷ The long refusal to recognize French involvement in the Holocaust has led to a recent over-commemoration as an attempt to deal with this traumatic past and a guilty national conscience, like Roussio describes with his "Vichy Syndrome" concept.

II. The Ratonnade d'Octobre

October 17, 1961 is arguably another moment in French history yet to pass. Police repression of Algerians during the Algerian War marks the 1950s and early 1960s in Paris, especially from 1958 to 1962. In March of 1958, the French government called Maurice Papon to leave the fight in Algeria and return to Paris in the hopes that he might stop attacks on the city by the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN).¹⁸ Once there, he assumed the position of "prefect"—chief—of the Parisian police and began drawing up stricter measures meant to "maintain order" in Paris at the same time the army tried to

¹⁷ Eric Conan and Henry Roussio, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard/Pluriel, 2013), 9.

¹⁸ Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris, 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 33.

“maintain order” in French Algeria.¹⁹ Thus Papon drafted a list detailing the following four measures he believed the government should introduce: ban suspected terrorists from France, “give increased powers to the military tribunals in France,” allow the police to detain suspicious individuals by administrative order where they lack sufficient evidence to bring them to court, and reintroduce the expatriation of Algerians to Algeria by orders issued from the court in Algiers.²⁰ This became the *Ordonnance* of October 7, 1958. Under this ordinance, the police could hold Algerians “under arrest for two weeks,” so the police could interrogate them, and the Minister of the Interior also allowed them to keep Algerians in detention camps “without trial or...return them into the hands of the army in Algeria.”²¹ A little over a month before the introduction of the ordinance, Papon created an auxiliary police unit specifically meant to combat the FLN in Paris—the “Service de coordination des affaires algériennes,” or simply “SCAA.”²² This unit commanded the already existing Brigade des agressions et violences (BAV), 8th Brigade territoriale, and a newly created brigade of *Harkis*—Algerian soldiers fighting against Algerian independence alongside the French.²³

Around the same time as the creation of the SCAA, Papon also received approval for the opening of “triage (sorting) centers” in the city, which the police then used to detain Algerians with suspected ties to the FLN.²⁴ The police firstly “transformed” the Vélodrome d’Hiver—a site of Jewish internment just sixteen years earlier—into such a

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 68-69.

²¹ Ibid., 69.

²² Ibid., 171.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Emmanuel Blanchard, *La Police parisienne et les Algériens (1944-1962)* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2011), 306.

center six days after the approval.²⁵ They rounded up, or “raflé” as the press called it once again, 3,000 Algerians for inspection and interrogation.²⁶ The communist newspaper *L’Humanité* acknowledged and criticized the connections between Jewish internment during the Occupation and the internment of Algerians, stating: “A racist concentration camp has been open in the middle of Paris for two days. They didn’t even have the decency to choose a place that symbolized nothing to French patriots...Thousands of Algerians are imprisoned in the Vél’ d’Hiv...in which the Nazis previously crammed thousands of Jews!”²⁷ The newspaper, of course, did not know at this time that the Nazis were not responsible, but rather that the French police had, as with the Algerians, actually been responsible for the collection of internees at the Vél’ d’Hiv. Like the Jews in 1942, the Algerian internees also endured awful conditions. The Technical Hygiene Service of the state performed a general inspection on September 1, 1958, finding that the site was overcrowded to the point that some people had to resort to sleeping while standing because there was no floor room, some days only one water fountain worked, there were no towels or toilet paper, there was hardly any way to wash oneself, piles of trash “[gave] off a fetid stench”, and the walls were covered in excrement.²⁸ The police rounded up and interned Algerians in other places as well, including the Gymnase Japy, which was also a site of Jewish internment during the Occupation.²⁹ The police stopped using the sites as “triage centers” in January 1959, because Parisians complained that they could not use

²⁵ *Le Monde*, 29 August 1958.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *L’Humanité*, 29 August 1958.

²⁸ Blanchard, 308.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

their gyms and watch live sports.³⁰ Therefore, Papon opened a new triage center in the bois de Vincennes, referred to as the “Centre d’identification de Vincennes,” or “CIV”.³¹

Things came to a head in 1961, specifically during the months of August, September, and October. Journalists Marcel and Paulette Péju, who witnessed this period, stated that during these months, “not a day or night [went] by without frisking by the police, rafles, raids, and arrests...the dead and injured [were] no longer counted.”³² Police brutality peaked during 1961, and so did violence against the police within France; 22 policemen and Harkis were killed, and 76 were injured.³³ As a result, Papon enforced measures against Algerians to a greater degree. He told *Le Monde* on October 3, 1961, “for every blow received, we will render ten.”³⁴ Two days later, he announced a curfew for all Algerians. They were not to be out in the city between 8:30 PM and 5:00 AM.³⁵ Papon also recommended that Algerians walk around alone, because “small groups [risked] appearing suspicious to police on rounds and patrols.”³⁶ The French branch of the FLN decided that Algerians should protest the curfew and called Parisian Algerians, including women and children, to protest peacefully on the Champs-Élysées at 8:30 PM on October 17, 1961.³⁷ The FLN was clear: not a single protester should carry anything that even resembled a weapon.³⁸ General Charles de Gaulle, president of the Republic, told Papon to ban and disperse the protest by any means, effectively giving him a “blank

³⁰ Ibid., 308-309.

³¹ Ibid., 309.

³² Marcel et Paulette Péju, *Le 17 octobre des Algériens* (Paris: La Découverte, 2011), 27.

³³ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 90.

³⁴ *Le Monde*, 3 October 1961.

³⁵ Youcef Dris, *Massacres d’octobre 1961: Papon la honte* (Algiers: Editions Alpha, 2009), 54.

³⁶ Ibid., 55.

³⁷ Ibid., 69.

³⁸ Ibid., 70.

check.”³⁹ Papon assured his men that “they [would] be covered,” so that “when [they notified] headquarters that a North African [had] been shot, the boss called to the scene [had] what [was] needed to make sure the North African [had] a weapon on him since, at the...time, there [was] no room for mistakes.”⁴⁰

From 6:00 PM onwards, police waited in certain “key Métro stations” and arrested Algerians as they stepped off the trains.⁴¹ They forced them into the connecting passageways between metro lines, where they detained them, waiting for transports to arrive, sometimes standing for three to four hours in the hot, nearly airless spaces as policemen beat them and insulted them.⁴² Papon requisitioned Régie autonome des transports parisiens (RATP) buses to take the rounded up Algerians to the “triage centers” in the city, and they often arrested Tunisians and Moroccans, as well, because the police arrested people who *looked* Algerian.⁴³ Many protestors did not take the Métro. Some marched to the Pont de Neuilly from work and home, and as they reached the bridge, the police fired on them without warning and charged the group, wielding all sorts of weapons, like “riot clubs, rifle butts, and, in some instances, ‘unofficial’ weapons, including iron bars and pick-axe handles,” and the policemen broke thirty of the fifty clubs issued to them by district commander Mézière.⁴⁴ Something similar occurred at the Pont Saint Michel. The police threw the bodies of “wounded or unconscious men” into

³⁹ Ibid., 69.

⁴⁰ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 105.

⁴¹ Ibid., 121.

⁴² Jean-Luc Einaudi, *Octobre 1961: Un massacre à Paris* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2001), 196.

⁴³ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 121; Michel Levine, *Les Ratonnades d’Octobre: Un meurtre collectif à Paris en 1961* (Paris: Jean-Claude Gawsewitch Editeur, 2011), 114.

⁴⁴ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 118, from Pierre Mézière’s report to the Director of the Municipal Police on 17 October 1961.

the Seine.⁴⁵ The following day, the prefecture issued replacement bullets to some officers, so that if the state opened an investigation, “they [could] give evidence that they had not fired.”⁴⁶ Papon made sure that they were “covered” in this way as well.

One Algerian, Ahcène, shared his account of police brutality that night: “When the policemen [turned] to me to hit me, I [cried] out that I [was] a former soldier and [showed] them my papers. They let me go...my friend [did] the same. They kept my nephew. They [continued] to beat him and blood [poured] from his head and nose. From afar, I [saw] them pick him up and throw him into the Seine.”⁴⁷ Luckily, the nephew survived. Another Algerian called his six-day internment at a “triage center” “concentrated hell,” and during that time, the police stole his money and identification papers.⁴⁸ A doctor at a “triage center” also gave his testimony:

“...armed guards circulate...800 to 1,000 Algerians wait, pressed against the grates or sleeping close to one another on the ground to fight the cold...to the right of the entrance is a tent with 10 people, serving as an infirmary and hospital. To the left, four or five rows of tables covered in files serve as the “triage” (sorting) center....to take care of the injured men, we only have alcohol, liquid soap, oxygenated water, mercurochrome, gauze bandages, and a few surgical tools...we have no antibiotics...those with cranial fractures cannot be helped and die quickly...”⁴⁹

Bodies hung in the Bois de Boulogne and littered the streets.⁵⁰ Some policemen shared their experiences, like Raoul Letard who reported that after 11:00 PM that night, he and some other policemen “fired on everything that moved, it was horrible...for two hours it was a man hunt.”⁵¹

⁴⁵ Ibid., from I. Bassad’s 1999 interview.

⁴⁶ Einaudi, *Octobre 1961*, 193-194.

⁴⁷ Dris, *Massacres d’octobre 1961*, 75.

⁴⁸ Péju and Péju, *Le 17 octobre*, 70.

⁴⁹ Dris, *Massacres d’octobre 1961*, 78.

⁵⁰ Paul Webster, *The Guardian*, 18 October 1991.

⁵¹ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 119, original quotation from Archives IHESI.

In an article published just after the event, El Moudjahid wrote: “It is the French government that will bear the heavy responsibility of such doings.”⁵² The massacre, or “ratonnade” as it is often called, of October 17, 1961 is, like the rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv, a dark page in France’s history. There were actually many similarities in the way the French police approached both events: there were specialized intelligence agencies for policing of both Jews and Algerians, censuses were taken of minority populations, *fichiers* (enormous card-index files of where to find and how to identify certain individuals), mass round-ups, special police units just for intervening in confrontations with these groups, “triage centers” to detain and screen individuals, and discriminatory legislation meant to “identify and detain minorities.”⁵³ Maurice Papon, the chief of the Parisian police, claimed “the police did what they had to do” and that they—the police, the French—“won the battle for Paris,” likening the police’s actions to those of Parisians during the Liberation in 1944 by calling it the “bataille de Paris.”⁵⁴ There is no definitive number of deaths. However, as Jim House and Neil MacMaster state, “this does not open the door to relativism or the position that mass killings never occurred.”⁵⁵ The police and historian Jean-Paul Brunet place the figure somewhere between two and fifty deaths, whereas historian Jean-Luc Einaudi places the figure somewhere between 200 and 350 deaths.⁵⁶ The French government has kept the archives closed, for the most part, only opening them to three select historians, including Brunet, but not Einaudi, even when

⁵² Péju and Péju, *Le 17 octobre*, 87, from an article in the brochure *Les Manifestations algériennes d’octobre 1961 et la repression colonialiste en France*.

⁵³ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 34.

⁵⁴ Dris, *Massacres d’octobre*, 82.

⁵⁵ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 167.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 161.

Papon was suing the historian for defamation.⁵⁷ Debates over fully opening the archives, how to commemorate the event, and how to teach the event continue today, echoing the Vichy Syndrome and treatment of the rafle du Vél' d'Hiv. The ratonnade of October 17 remains a memory that many French want to forget and many want to constantly commemorate.

III. Papon on Trial

On July 16, 1995, the anniversary of the “rafle du Vélodrome d’Hiver,” Jacques Chirac—future president of the Republic but then mayor of Paris—publicly admitted and apologized for the French role in the perpetration of the round-up.⁵⁸ He did not just say Vichy, or “L’Etat *dit* français,” like all those before him who commemorated the event. He specifically stated that French policemen carried out the act—not the Nazis nor Vichy police. In that same month of July 1995, Maurice Papon, secretary general of the Gironde police prefecture during the Occupation who later served as prefect of the Parisian police and Minister of the Budget under President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, stood in front of a judge, trying to convince him to reject the government charges brought against him by families of Vél' d'Hiv victims. They meant to hold him partially responsible for the Vélodrome d’Hiver round-up which occurred over fifty years earlier.⁵⁹ This trial played a substantial role in shaping how the French state and its people memorialized not only the rafle du Vél' d'Hiv, but also the repression of Algerians in Paris by the police during the Algerian War, especially the massacre that occurred on October 17, 1961. Maurice Papon served as a specific police link between the two events. It is this particular trial to which

⁵⁷ Ibid., 313.

⁵⁸ *Le Monde*, “Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, et les responsabilités de l’Etat français,” 16 July 1995.

⁵⁹ Albin Michel, *Le Procès de Maurice Papon*, vol. I (Paris, Albin Michel: 1998), 12.

we now turn, beginning with its formation over the years leading up to 1995, in order to better understand conceptions of these events in public memory up until this point and after.

On December 19, 1995, the courts decided to open the trial accusing Papon of “crimes against humanity” for his complicity in organizing and authorizing four Jewish deportation convoys, or “death trains”, which the prosecution later changed to eight.⁶⁰ A little over a year earlier, Paul Touvier became the first French citizen convicted of crimes against humanity for acts he committed under the Vichy regime, including the execution and deportation of Jews.⁶¹ Jean Leguay who, like Papon, aided in the round-up of Jews on the 16 and 17 July 1942, was the first Frenchman to be indicted for crimes against humanity in 1979, but he died of cancer ten years later without ever being convicted.⁶² René Bousquet, former general secretary to the Vichy police, was indicted for crimes against humanity two years after Leguay’s death, accused by Serge Klarsfeld as significantly responsible for the round-up of Jews in the “free zone,” who were later sent to the Vélodrome d’Hiver as part of the great round-up that took place the 16 and 17 July, 1942.⁶³ Two years later, before Bousquet’s trial even began, Christian Didier, a man who tried to kill the famous S.S. officer Klaus Barbie in 1987, fatally shot Bousquet.⁶⁴

One could say all of this started with “l’épuration,” the French “purge” of collaborators, which took place after World War II. Touvier’s and Bousquet’s trials have roots in this purge and both trials fell under the statute of limitations that allowed them to

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Richard J. Golsan, ed., *Memory, the Holocaust, and French Justice: the Bousquet and Touvier Affairs*, trans. Lucy and Richard J. Golsan (Hanover, NH, University of New England Press: 1996), xxxii.

⁶² Conan and Rouso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*.

⁶³ Golsan, *Memory, the Holocaust, and French Justice*, xxvi and xxix.

⁶⁴ Ibid., xxxiii.

escape conviction in one way or another until the statute was circumvented with the passage of a law to be discussed in the next section. President Pompidou even pardoned Touvier in 1971, against the recommendations of his cabinet.⁶⁵ With this began the second purge, as groups protested against the pardon throughout 1972 and “two accusations of crimes against humanity [were] brought against Touvier” in 1973.⁶⁶ Leguay was indicted for crimes against humanity in 1979, Touvier was indicted in 1981, Papon in 1983, and Bousquet in 1991.⁶⁷ Throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, the Holocaust, Vichy, and specifically the Vélodrome d’Hiver, to which three of these four men were connected, were ever-present in French political culture and memory. Of these trials, Maurice Papon’s was the last and by far the longest. In fact, the Papon trial is the longest trial in at least the last century of French history, lasting 95 days and ending with guilty verdict for the charges of crimes against humanity and sentencing of ten years incarceration.⁶⁸ Some say this trial became so significant because Papon stood in for Leguay and Bousquet, who never made it to trial.⁶⁹ This further speaks to the idea of a “past that does not pass,” in the words of historian Henry Rousso.⁷⁰

The length of Papon’s trial is certainly of consequence for broader studies of French memory; however its connection to two specific events—the rafle du Vélodrome d’Hiver, as well as the massacre of Algerians in October of 1961 and the subsequent

⁶⁵ Ibid., xxiv.

⁶⁶ Ibid., xxv.

⁶⁷ Ibid., xxvi-xxix.

⁶⁸ Richard J. Golsan, ed., *The Papon Affair: Memory and Justice on Trial*, trans. Lucy B. and Richard J. Golsan (New York, Routledge: 2000), 1; Henry Rousso, *The Haunting Past: History, Memory, and Justice in Contemporary France*, trans. Ralph Schoolcraft (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), xiv.

⁶⁹ Pierre Nora, in an interview with Nicolas Weill and Robert Solé in *Le Monde*, 1 October 1997, published in Golsan’s *The Papon Affair*, 176.

⁷⁰ Phrase coined by Henry Rousso in his work *The Vichy Syndrome*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1991).

police repression of Algerians during the Algerian War—sets it apart from the other postwar Purge trials for the purpose of this thesis. The courts only tried and convicted Papon for his involvement in the round-up of July 1942, but the prosecution brought the October massacre out of the past to attest to Papon’s character.⁷¹ As a result, the state opened an official investigation into the events of October 1961. Historian Jean-Luc Einaudi publicly charged Papon with full responsibility for the deaths of hundreds of Algerians in an article he published in *Le Monde* 20 May, 1998, not long after the trial ended. Maurice Papon sued him for defamation in 1999 and despite Papon’s earlier conviction of crimes against humanity in the Vél’ d’Hiv case, he was officially supported by the French state that had recently sentenced him to imprisonment.⁷² The court dismissed the case, but in recent years the government has slowly taken steps to recognize and memorialize the event, primarily in the last few years, as the Algerian “conflict” itself was not even recognized as the “Algerian War” until the same year the defamation suit took place.⁷³

Papon’s first trial raised numerous questions about responsibility for modern traumas and how the state should officially recognize such traumas. These issues reappeared in his “second” trial—his defamation suit against historian Jean-Luc Einaudi. Papon did not intend to become the “accused” since he was the “accuser,” but he became the “accused” nonetheless, as historians Jim House and Neil MacMaster state in their

⁷¹*The New York Times*, “Trial of Vichy Official Lifts Veil on Killing of Algerians,” 18 October 1997.

⁷² Paul Webster, “Papon suit raises racist ghost; Paris police killed Algerians in 'storm of hatred',” *The Guardian*, 15 February 1999.

⁷³ Benjamin Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire: De l’”Algérie française” au racisme anti-arabe* (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 1999), 17.

work *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory*.⁷⁴ This trial was truly about the extent of Papon's culpability in the mistreatment of Algerians in Paris during the Algerian War and, by extension, French involvement in the massacre. Again a divisive memory, the nation struggled with the question of how to recognize and commemorate it, if either at all. One decision it did make was to not make archives available but to a few historians not including Einaudi, as opposed to opening them completely to the public. In the end, the case was thrown out; as with the beginnings of commemoration and recognition of the Holocaust in France, the state was not yet ready to admit French involvement in atrocities against an "othered" population. Whatever their verdicts, both trials had one specific shared outcome: they made Maurice Papon a *lieu de mémoire* for the rafle and the ratonnade. As such, Papon has essentially come to represent the Vichy Syndrome and its modern connection to the traumas of the Algerian War that began with his trial. It is specifically Papon and his history that made possible the ratonnade's capacity to perpetuate an obsession with Holocaust, something discussed in further detail in the following section on commemoration of the rafle and ratonnade.

IV. The Politics of Historical Memory: Commemorating the Rafle du Vél' d'Hiv and the Ratonnade d'octobre

Though this trial of accusations between Einaudi and Papon may have set in motion an obsession with the Algerian War that eventually led to official recognition, it did little at the time and for many years following to encourage state recognition of the October Massacre and, more generally, police repression of Algerians in France during the Algerian War. This is most likely due to the fact that the French government associated, and still associates, this repression with the larger, still difficult topic of the

⁷⁴ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 313.

Algerian War and state actions toward Arab populations. It was not until 1999, as noted earlier, that the government officially recognized the Algerian conflict as “the Algerian War,” previously calling it by its military moniker: “Operation Maintaining Order.”⁷⁵ This issue of naming the conflict figured as a particular point of difficulty for the French government because in calling it the “Algerian War,” they would in effect acknowledge that Algeria was a separate country and not part of France, both at the time of the war’s actual occurrence and in contemporary times. Algeria was not a typical colony; in fact, it was not officially a colony, possession, or territory at all. It was “departmentalized” into three departments—essentially administrative states—of France, therefore existing much like the regular departments in “l’Hexagone.”⁷⁶ Therefore, to the French state, Algeria was actually a true part of France, which explains its longtime reluctance to call the conflict the “Algerian” War. Arguing about semantics in this case was actually quite important. This particular piece of legislation demonstrated that the French government was only just beginning to come to terms with the meaning of the large issue that is the Algerian War. Changing the name of the conflict was a first step toward a new memory, but France was perhaps not yet ready to fully examine all aspects of that time period. However, on October 16, 1997, the government did promise to open the archives specifically concerning police repression of Algerians in France during the Algerian War, previously sealed to the public by governmental legislation.⁷⁷ It was not until 1998 that the state “opened” the archives—to “three hand-picked historians.”⁷⁸ To this day, the

⁷⁵ Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire*, 17 & 28.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁷⁷ *Le Monde*, 18 October 1997.

⁷⁸ House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 9.

government has yet to fully open the archives, which reveals continuing controversy and difficulties surrounding this particular event.

Refusing to open the official archives does not, of course, mean that there is not or there has not been collective commemoration of the police repression of Algerians and specifically the *ratonnade d'octobre*. Memorialization began to develop throughout the 1980s, becoming larger in scale and more frequent in the 1990s. Michel Levine published the first historical work on the subject in 1985 under the title *Ratonnades d'octobre*, to which there was little response.⁷⁹ In 1990, the organization “Au nom de la mémoire”—“In Memory’s Name”—placed a plaque under the bridge located in the Parisian suburb of Bezons to commemorate victims of the October massacre, which the police prefecture promptly removed.⁸⁰ One year later on the 17 October, 10,000 protestors walked the same path many Algerians took that same night thirty years before, carrying banners that read “No to racism, no to forgetting. For the right to memory.”⁸¹ Ten years later and two years after the official recognition of the “Algerian War,” the Paris City Council finally decided, by a close vote, to place a plaque on the Right Bank side of the Pont Saint Michel.⁸² Its inscription reads: “In memory of the many Algerians killed during the bloody repression of the peaceful demonstration of October 17, 1961.” Such wording left ambiguous the perpetrator of this “bloody repression,” again showing reluctance to admit French involvement in the execution of the massacre, just as with the *rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv*.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 289.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 295.

⁸¹ *Le Monde*, 19 October 1991.

⁸² House and MacMaster, *Paris, 1961*, 318.

In addition, “no government member attended [the placement of the plaque] in an official capacity.”⁸³



This is the plaque placed by the Paris City Council. It is hardly noticeable when walking around this area. (Photo my own, June 2013)

In the years since the placement of the plaque, commemoration has become much more active and frequent. One particularly significant development in the commemoration of the October Massacre occurred in 2012 when President François Hollande officially recognized the massacre and French perpetration of the event. He signed the “Call for the official recognition of the tragedy of the 17 October 1961 in Paris,” and spoke at the commemorative anniversary of the event.⁸⁴ Although he did not officially lay the blame on the Republic during his speech, his signature of the unofficial decree (unofficial in the sense that it was not an actual piece of legislation and not drafted

⁸³ Ibid., 319.

⁸⁴ *Le Monde*, 17 October 2012.

by the President himself) and his spoken recognition that the event simply happened was enough for critics and activists alike to call it an official recognition.⁸⁵ It was a large gesture that carried both political and historical weight, comparable to Jacques Chirac's recognition in 1995 of French involvement in the rafle du Vél d'Hiv.

Unlike the police repression of Algerians during the late 1950s and 1960s and specifically the October Massacre, which, up until the last few years, the French population hardly commemorated, the round-up at the Vélodrome d'Hiver has experienced what some might call "over-commemoration." By at least 1960, some French citizens began to collectively and publicly memorialize the event. *Le Monde* described the 1942 round-up and announced the details of the ceremony that would take place on July 12, 1960.⁸⁶ This "over-commemoration" did not begin in 1960, but developed throughout the 1970s and 1980s, eventually reaching peak recollection and memorialization in the 1990s. Each decade marked a new phase of French *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—"the process of coming to terms with the past"—specifically their Vichy past, just like Germany's attempts at dealing with its Nazi past for which this term was created to describe.

Though commemoration may have started much earlier for the rafle du Vél d'Hiv than for the police repression of Algerians in France, the French had yet to come to terms with their own involvement in the execution of the event. One can see this with *Le Monde*'s brief summary of the round-up in the previously described article from 1960, which states that the Gestapo, not the French police, arrested Jews in Paris those two days in July. Though some might argue that many French citizens did not know, many did, and

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ *Le Monde*, July 8 1960.

to argue that the French had no knowledge of this fact is wrong; the round-up happened in Parisian streets, in broad daylight, at the hands of French policemen, many of whom were still alive to remember these events in 1960. Not only did many French surely know about the involvement of their fellow citizens in rounding up the Jews, they also knew that those arrested were not simply sent to work camps. As historian Robert Paxton said in an interview: “...when they deported old people and children, they obviously knew that they were not being sent to work camps. Their exact fate was not known, but the fact that they would be mistreated could not be ignored and they knew this treatment would be inhumane.”⁸⁷

The government did actively censor the media and the arts during the 1950s and 60s, however, specifically in regards to representations of French collaboration. Just five years prior to the publication of the *Le Monde* article, the Republic censored Alain Resnais’s controversial film *Nuit et brouillard*. They threatened to ban its release unless the director agreed to make a French policeman unidentifiable as French in one scene that showed this policeman looking out over a Vichy internment camp.⁸⁸ So in some ways one can understand how at least those born after the rafle might not have known the extent of French involvement. Specifically government censorship, though, speaks to the reluctance at that time of the state and its officials—the great majority of whom were alive and held public service positions during the war—to recognize any culpability on the side of the “true” French, that is to say all French citizens under the Fourth Republic. Ironically, in acting on this reluctance, the state repressed civil liberties, for which

⁸⁷ Golsan, *The Papon Affair*, 183.

⁸⁸ Sylvie Lindeperg, “*Nuit et brouillard*”: *un film dans l’histoire* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2007), 150-156.

Vichy—the same government against which the postwar Republic tried to define itself—was notorious.

As the years passed, groups of citizens continued to commemorate the rafle. Before the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, very few French citizens ever called for official state recognition of French perpetration of the rafle. One can attribute much of the change in sentiment after the 1980s to the evolving spirit of the times largely created and dictated by the series of trials previously discussed. On February 3, 1993, for example, the government proclaimed July 16 as a “national day of commemoration for the racist and anti-Semitic acts of persecution committed under the authority of the de facto ‘government of the French State’ (1940-1944).”⁸⁹ The next year on July 17, 1994, François Mitterrand, then president of the Republic, inaugurated a monument in homage to victims of the rafle. The sculpture’s inscription reads: “The French Republic pays homage to the victims of racist and anti-Semitic persecution and crimes against humanity, committed under the authority of the de facto ‘government of the French State’ (1940-1944). Never forget.”⁹⁰ Both the decree and the monument’s inscription reveal France’s difficulty to officially admit its own role in the Final Solution. The French displaced the blame by firstly naming Vichy as solely responsible, and secondly by separating the Vichy government from the true “Republic.” The use of quotation marks around the proclaimed name of the French government under Vichy shows the refusal of French officials in the 1990s to recognize Vichy as a valid government and, furthermore, as representative of the French. They were right to believe that much of what Vichy stood for went against the core principles of the French Republic. However, to them, the real

⁸⁹ Conan and Rouso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, 348.

⁹⁰ *Le Monde*, 19 July 1994.

French Republic did not exist at all during the four-year period of 1940 to 1944, and therefore could not be blamed for “acts of persecution” committed both in the occupied and unoccupied zones.



The Vél' d'Hiv monument inaugurated by François Mitterrand. (Photo my own, June 2013)

Mitterrand stated in 1992 during the Fête nationale that French citizens should not hold the Republic accountable for any persecution or crimes committed against Jews.⁹¹ He said with little sensitivity that the Republic “did what it [or she] had to do,” thus attempting to explain French collaboration at the same time he was trying to say that it was not really the French who collaborated.⁹² Speaking about collaboration on the day of the Fête nationale shows a troubled government increasingly conscious of past crimes, leading to a near-constant, unapologetically nationalistic, defensive rhetoric. Normally, a president would not address any sort of negative perception of the Republic on the

⁹¹ *Le Monde*, 18 July 1995.

⁹² *Ibid.*

national holiday. It seemed that the president and other officials felt that if they admitted any sort of involvement in the rafle, and by extension the Holocaust, it would mean the end of the true Republic or, more specifically, its core principles that they viewed as the basis for all laws and official actions of the state. In 1994 after the inauguration of the monument, Mitterrand strongly reaffirmed his ideas about the rafle: “I will not make excuses in the name of France...France is not responsible...Not the Republic, not France!”⁹³ Perhaps this also reflected Mitterrand’s personal conflicts with the Vichy period, during which he served as an official of the Vichy regime for a time and as a member of the Resistance for a time.

Beginning in the late 1980s, many organizations, like the Comité du Vél’ d’Hiv 42 and the Amicale des anciens déportés juifs de France, actively encouraged Mitterrand and the French State to recognize French involvement.⁹⁴ However, it was not until 1995 that Jacques Chirac, not President Mitterrand, publicly admitted French involvement in the rafle. On the 16 July, 1995, Chirac gave the annual commemorative speech. *Le Monde* reported that after giving a “brief introduction,” he “exclaimed” that “the occupier’s criminal insanity was seconded by the French, by the French State”—not the “de facto ‘government of the French State.’”⁹⁵ He further detailed French involvement, going on to explain just how far it went, recognizing that “Parisian buses and police vans” deported the Jews who were rounded up.⁹⁶ He noted with incredulity that such an event happened at the hands of citizens of the country known for the Enlightenment and

⁹³ *Le Monde*, 18 July 1995.

⁹⁴ Conan and Rouso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, 59-61; *Le Monde* July 18 1995.

⁹⁵ *Le Monde*, 18 July 1995.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

the “droits de l’homme”—“the Rights of Man.”⁹⁷ He told the audience that, “on that day, France committed an irreparable [atrocité].”⁹⁸ Prime Minister Lionel Jospin publicly disagreed with Chirac, stating that “Vichy was the negation of France,” and therefore one could never say the people who and the government that committed these acts were truly French, of course refusing to recognize that Frenchmen of the occupied zone—not Vichy (though they did play a role in getting Jews within Vichy territory to Paris for this event)—arrested the Jews in Paris during the rafle.⁹⁹ The argument devolved into a fight over semantics, just as it did for the government in regards to the Algerian War, because there was little else officials like Jospin and Mitterrand could use to remove blame from the Republic. They had to create a non-French entity on which to lay the blame and so they defined Vichy as non-French.

Five years later at an international conference about the Holocaust in Stockholm, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin finally admitted, however vaguely, that France was responsible for the Vél’ d’Hiv round-up. At this conference dedicated purely to how European governments should deal with their Holocaust past—something unique to this singular event and practically nonexistent for all other traumatic European events—Jospin spoke of the importance of teaching about the Holocaust. He pointed to France as an example, stating “In France, we now fully prescribe to this devoir de mémoire et d’éducation [duty to remember and teach].”¹⁰⁰ This idea of a “devoir de mémoire,” or duty of memory/to remember, is why France has what Henry Rousso calls the “Vichy

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vél’ d’Hiv in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 88.

¹⁰⁰ *Le Monde*, 28 January 2000.

Syndrome”—this obsession with the past and the feeling that French citizens and the French government constantly have to recall this period of history. This is certainly true; the government often does affirm that the French have a “devoir de mémoire,” as one can see with Lionel Jospin’s statement that schools should put an emphasis on teaching students about the Holocaust; but the complete historical truth of the French role in facilitating the Holocaust has always been difficult to acknowledge.

Schools, in particular, have nevertheless taken up this memorializing task for quite some time now; Eric Conan and Henry Rousso reported in 1994 that French historical textbooks for public school students dedicated up to fifteen percent of their material to just four years of the nation’s history: 1940 to 1944.¹⁰¹ In addition, a large number of Parisian primary schools placed plaques about the deportation of Jews at the entrances of their institutions. This lies in stark contrast with treatment of the Algerian War, and more specifically the October massacre, in schools. Historian and Inspector General of National Education from 1991 to 2003, Jean-Pierre Rioux, stated in 2001 that “he was not sure if teachers should talk about [the events of 17October] to students because it could incite the formation of a poor opinion of the police and other institutions of the Republic.”¹⁰²

Another more focused example of the expanding historical memory of the rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv can be found among the Parisian police, as well. The 2005 Parisian Chief of Police, Pierre Mutz, told *The Guardian* that “all new Paris recruits would visit the [Holocaust] Memorial centre and archives as a part of their training.”¹⁰³ Such a measure shows just how important contemporary governmental organizations now believe the

¹⁰¹ Conan and Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, 243.

¹⁰² Péju and Péju, *Le 17 octobre*, 182.

¹⁰³ *The Guardian*, 18 June 2005.

memory of this period should be. They want people to recall this specific period, certainly in the hopes that something like the rafle du Vél' d'Hiv will never happen again, but also perhaps for the government to convince itself and its citizens that they are dealing with their dark past in a way that leaves no room for criticism.

This is the “over-commemoration” symptomatic of the “Vichy syndrome” about which Conan and Roussio write. Since the government has taken up such a “duty”—a duty to “[reaffirm] universal, humanist values” through “recognition of debt”—individual citizens are also taught to feel the same way, to feel like, as one French woman put it recently, “we will never be able to do enough.”¹⁰⁴ The Vichy Syndrome has yet to come to an end, as many might argue it did with the conclusion of the Papon trial. The Vichy syndrome has become a kind of hyper-consciousness about events between 1940 and 1944 and, more specifically, the rafle du Vél' d'Hiv of 1942, which has come to be the site-specific representation of France's role in the Holocaust. The foundation that organized the commemoration of the Camp des Milles, for example, called les Milles the “Vél' d'Hiv of the south;” and when the French state referred to this round-up when it wanted to inaugurate the Drancy museum on the event's July anniversary. Meanwhile, the October massacre has in similar ways come to represent the wider history of police repression of Algerians in France during the Algerian War;¹⁰⁵ in both cases, the past remains part of the French present, because the government has gradually come to define and disseminate historical memory, creating an “official” history or “official” memory. Such an approach to history proves problematic as it usually does not allow for a diversity of voices and thus creates a “right” type or perception of history and certain

¹⁰⁴ Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, 88; *The New York Times*, 29 July 2012.

¹⁰⁵ La Fondation du Camp des Milles, “Site-mémorial du Camp des Milles-comprendre pour demain” (Aix-en-Provence: Exprimer, 2012), 8; Wieviorka and Laffitte, *A l'Intérieur*, 347.

historical events. In the French language, history, in the broadest sense as an entire discipline and unique entity, is spelled with a capitalized “H”—“l’Histoire”—giving it pronoun-like properties, that is to say agency. To historians like Pierre Nora, such a distinction confirms his belief in allowing history to speak for itself through historical research by scholars, not to be written, dictated, or judged by the government.¹⁰⁶ It was the Papon trial, during which the judicial system all but demanded that historians like Robert Paxton and Jean-Luc Einaudi should provide an “official” history with which prosecutors could prove Papon guilty, that led Nora to this claim and to take part in the “Liberté pour l’Histoire” movement.

Where Nora, Rouso, and Conan take a more critical, largely negative, approach to this “devoir de mémoire,” believing that the time has passed for legal prosecutions beyond the statute of limitations, the historian and famed Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld takes the opposite approach, stating, “I believe we must ceaselessly remember that which I call the darkest page of French history.”¹⁰⁷ Nora and Rouso find problematic this new French approach to the ethics of justice in regards to cases that have passed the statute of limitations. As a result, Nora and many other historians created a movement called “Liberté pour l’Histoire”—“Freedom for History”—in order to address the nationalization of history, for lack of better terms. Much as some call for a France for the “French,” these historians believe history lies within the realm of historians. They state:

“France is the only democratic country to have imposed upon its citizens such a body of ‘historical’ legislation...On the 12th of October, 2006, a deputy declared to the tribunal: ‘We don’t leave medicine to doctors, why should we leave history to historians?’ ...But we have never seen the Parliament substitute its own diagnosis and prescriptions for those of doctors...In regards to the Past, what are parliamentarians currently doing? They are substituting their diagnoses for those

¹⁰⁶ *Le Figaro*, “Liberté pour l’Histoire,” 10 August 2008.

¹⁰⁷ Alain Vincenot, *Vél’ d’ Hiv 16 juillet 1942*, from Serge Klarsfeld’s preface, 10.

of historians. In doing so, they are placing researchers under the tutelage of judges.”¹⁰⁸

It is true—the government should not write history because this creates an “official” history. Government histories usually reject the idea that history has a multitude of voices and perspectives, and that historical knowledge often has subjective elements. Nora touches on this when he expresses concern about the “victimization of the past,” meaning a view and judgment of the past solely from the victim’s perspective. France particularly struggles in this respect because of the previously discussed paradox of desiring unity, thus favoring an official history, and upholding its commitment to the preservation of human rights, thus wanting to acknowledge human rights violations. The state imagines that fully recognizing French involvement would divide the nation. Many officials like Jospin and Mitterrand thought such division might occur if they admitted to fault on behalf of the Republic in regards to the rafle, though it ultimately did not. In attempt to satisfy both paradoxical desires of the nation, officials tried and continue to try to selectively remember and judge parts of events related to the Holocaust and the Algerian War. In addition, as Eric Conan and Henry Rousso stated, this “obsession with the past—with this specific [Holocaust] past—is only a substitute for the pressing matters of the present or, worse still, a refusal of the future.”¹⁰⁹ Thus remembrance of one event can be perpetuated by a refusal to confront other controversial events.

The Gayssot Act, in particular, demonstrates this situation of denying and circumventing official remembrance of one trauma through recognition of another. The Gayssot Act served as a way to avoid the trauma of Algeria by addressing the memory of the Holocaust. France did not ratify the United Nations’ “Convention on the non-

¹⁰⁸ *Le Figaro*, excerpts from “Liberté pour l’Histoire.”

¹⁰⁹ Conan and Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, 286.

applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity,” drafted in 1968, shortly after the Algerian War.¹¹⁰ Instead, France selectively chose to create its own law—la loi Gayssot—in 1990 to circumvent the statute of limitations just for any crimes against humanity related to the Holocaust. One key reason behind adopting the Gayssot Act in lieu of signing the United Nations’ convention was to keep French military officials from facing indictment for crimes against humanity for the use of torture on Algerians during the Algerian War. In trying to “[reaffirm] universal, humanist values,” the French negated them by selectively recognizing instances of crimes against humanity rather than recognizing all such instances. This reveals a problem that the Vichy Syndrome can create: the state can use this obsession to avoid confronting other controversial events. Dominick LaCapra notes the power of the Holocaust memory in this way, stating that “the challenge is to discuss [the Holocaust] in ways that [do not] allow it to serve diversionary functions.”¹¹¹

An obsession with the Algerian War has begun to develop over the past two decades through attempts to deny aspects of it and to use other aspects to support Holocaust remembrance. This again reveals a guilty conscience, as with the Holocaust memory in France, fed by a failure to acknowledge the complete historical truth of French involvement in the persecution of Algerians. As LaCapra states, “the French concern with Vichy is a way of displacing anxiety about Algeria and its aftermath.”¹¹² It is a complex situation because the Vichy Syndrome simultaneously leads to the purposeful denial of one trauma and in doing such increases focus on the same trauma. This is especially true

¹¹⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 754, p. 73.

¹¹¹ Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 173.

¹¹² LaCapra, *Writing History*, 171.

for these two particular events, the rafle and ratonnade, because of their historical similarities and their shared *lieu de mémoire*—Maurice Papon; their connection inevitably causes them to affect one another's remembrance and the Vichy Syndrome complicates the commemoration of both.

Camp Joffre de Rivesaltes and the “Victims” of the Vichy Syndrome

Camp Joffre de Rivesaltes, located a few hours north of the Spanish-French border between the Pyrenees Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea, has a long history of housing, imprisoning, and interning many different groups of people of various nationalities. Despite this fact, the Camp de Rivesaltes is often solely associated with Jewish internment and deportation, which took place during two years of the camp’s 72-year existence. Algerians, including those called “Harkis” who served in the French military during the Algerian War, lived in the camp for the longest period of time. Many refer to them as the *oubliés*, or “forgotten,” of history, though it is questionable if they are really forgotten or if the French repress memories of them.¹ Some of the interned call themselves the “victims” of a “particular history.”² This chapter analyzes the history of the camp, divided into three chronological sections, and how the space has been collectively memorialized, specifically examining how its connection to the Holocaust has affected public perceptions of the camp. In looking at the three phases of the camp’s history, this chapter demonstrates the greater problems the Vichy Syndrome poses for memories of non-Holocaust modern traumas in France’s past.

I. Rivesaltes Before Jewish Internment: 1935-1940

In 1935, a new military camp opened in Rivesaltes named “Camp Joffre,” after Maréchal Joffre, a native of Rivesaltes and a hero of the Great War.³ Given its location near the Mediterranean Sea, the camp was ideal for the training of North African colonial

¹ Mohand Hamoumou and Abderahmen Moumen, “L’histoire des harkis et Français musulmans: la fin d’un tabou?” in Benjamin Stora and Mohammed Harbi’s *La Guerre d’Algérie: 1954-2004, la fin de l’amnésie* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 2004), 317.

² M.K., eyewitness account collected by Jean-Jacques Jordi and Mohand Hamoumou in their work, *Les harkis, une mémoire enfouie* (Paris: Editions Autrement, 1999), 55.

³ Violette and Juanito Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes: une histoire de l’enfermement (1935-2007)* (Portet-sur-Garonne, France: Nouvelles Editions Loubatières, 2009), 15.

troops; this was the camp's original purpose. Beginning in 1939, the French created companies of foreign workers (CTE), later called groups of foreign workers (GTE) like those from the Camp des Milles, to do construction work on the site and to build new, extended areas of the camp. These companies or groups consisted mainly of Spanish immigrants who had fled Franco's dictatorial regime. Until 1940, these workers continued to expand the camp. The French military envisioned an enormous facility that would consist of 2400 barracks grouped into 16 sectors, able to house approximately 18,000 soldiers. It never attained this size, but it eventually reached a total of 9 sectors.⁴



This image shows the current state of much of the camp. In the center is an intact latrine and around it are dilapidated barracks and overgrown vegetation. In the background, one can see the Pyrenees. (Photo my own, June 2013)

In 1939, the colonial troops left the camp for the front. After their defeat, they returned to Camp Joffre to await direction. Following the armistice between France and Germany, the troops were gradually sent back to their countries of origin. The last group

⁴ Ibid., 16.

of over 4000 colonial soldiers did not leave the camp until January 1941.⁵ Despite the continued presence of troops in the camp's barracks through 1940, the camp ceased operation as a military site that year. The new Vichy regime officially reopened the Camp de Rivesaltes as a site of internment on 10 August 1940, calling it the "Rivesaltes Accommodation Facility."⁶ The site already housed some Spanish immigrants who worked on the camp, as well as some internees left over from the French Republic, mostly Jewish immigrants from Axis countries, who resembled the internees at the Camp des Milles. These individuals continued to stay in the camp after the change in power to the Vichy regime.

A few months later, the government renamed the camp—the "Accommodation and Political Asylum Facility." At this point, the site housed 2000 internees, roughly made up of 1000 Spanish and 1000 Jewish immigrants, but the numbers grew each day, especially with the rise of new legislation against "undesirables."⁷ This marked the beginning of both Jewish and Gypsy internment in unoccupied France. Spanish exiles, the most numerous group at Rivesaltes until 1940, continued to be interned there as well, though the French authorities and Spanish priests supporting Franco constantly tried to convince them to return to Spain and to live under the dictatorship they fled.

II. Rivesaltes During Jewish Internment: 1940-1942

These three groups at the camp—Spanish immigrants, Jews, and Gypsies—were all treated very differently from each other starting in 1940. The Spanish continued to work in the GTE and they were also given the job of working in the kitchens—a coveted position given the access to food, which was strictly rationed. Jewish internees found

⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁶ Ibid., 35.

⁷ Ibid., 36.

themselves subject to the most security. They were restricted to Sectors F and K, isolated from the rest of the camp and banned from contact with the other internees; essentially, they were ghettoized within the camp. As the numbers of Jewish internees increased every day, the camp authorities further increased their separation from others through greater security measures. One internee, Elsa Ruth, stated in August 1942: “Things are not going well here, all of Sector K was emptied and they put barbed wire around Sectors F and K.”⁸ Gypsies were also treated differently from the other two groups. They were the only male internees allowed to live in the same barracks as their families. The French separated Spanish men from the women and children, and they did the same with the Jewish internees. Of the three groups at the camp, Jews received the worst treatment and, of course, they would have a very different fate than the other prisoners.

There were some things all internees experienced in the camp: a lack of proper hygiene, pests and vermin, malnutrition, and extreme weather conditions. Temperature in the area often ranged twenty degrees Celsius—approximately 45 degrees Fahrenheit—in a single day. The summers were extremely hot and dry. Rivesaltes also experienced one of its coldest winters in 1942. In addition, the tramontane—a strong, dry cold wind that comes from the north—blew 100 days in the year, sometimes up to 120 kilometers per hour, or 75 miles per hour.⁹ Internees struggled daily against extreme weather conditions. Jews in Sector K found their situation particularly miserable, as they had no heat until one month before the liquidation of that area of the camp.¹⁰ The blankets all internees

⁸ Elsa Ruth, an internee in Sector J, from one of her letters cited in Anne Boitel’s *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941-1942: Du centre d’hébergement au “Drancy de la zone libre”* (Perpignan, France: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan/Mare Nostrum, 2001).

⁹ Denis Peschanski, *La France des camps: L’internement, 1938-1946* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 118.

¹⁰ Boitel, *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941-1942*, 41.

used were “recycled” blankets that camp authorities previously used to bury the dead. Since many deaths occurred as a result of disease, these blankets very well may have infected the living who received these blankets afterwards.¹¹ From February to July 1941, the morbidity rate among all internees at the Camp de Rivesaltes was nearly 40 percent.¹²

Malnutrition and a lack of food contributed greatly to the high rate of disease among the interned. There were three meals a day. For breakfast, each adult received a “café mora”—rye coffee.¹³ For lunch and dinner, internees received a piece of headcheese, some vegetables, a little bit of bread, and barley coffee.¹⁴ As a result of this meager diet, the prisoners’ “principal preoccupation” was food.¹⁵ Many younger internees went throughout the camp all day searching for food like “savage, starving dogs.”¹⁶ Some, especially children, developed cachexia—a condition where individuals lose the will to live and do not eat as a result of severe malnutrition. Not only was the food insufficient, the camp’s water was polluted, which led to a great number of gastrointestinal infections, such as dysentery.¹⁷ Measles and Chickenpox were also common during this period, given the large population of children. In September 1941, a typhoid epidemic broke out. To make matters worse, the camp infirmary had very little medicine with which to treat the ill and only 300 sick beds for thousands of internees.¹⁸

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Peschanski, 142.

¹³ Santiago Salgado, interview from 28 December 2006, in Violette Marcos and Juanito Marcos’ *Les Camps de Rivesaltes: une histoire de l’enfermement (1935-2007)* (Portet-sur-Garonne, France: Nouvelles Editions Loubatières, 2009), 53-54.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 60.

¹⁶ Antonio Cascarosa, interview from 13 October 2006, in *ibid.*, 57.

¹⁷ Peschanski, *La France des camps*, 142.

¹⁸ Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 51.

In addition to extreme weather conditions and a lack of food, unsanitary conditions also caused disease in the camp. Rats and vermin infested Camp de Rivesaltes, carrying disease, infecting internees, and polluting the water in the camp. The toilets were located directly beside the two well-water sources, which ultimately led to contamination. Internees had difficulty keeping themselves clean, partly as a result of the polluted water, and partly because they showered only once a month—sometimes not even once. During these rare moments, they each shared a shower with twenty to thirty other people, and each group had ten minutes altogether to shower before the next group of twenty to thirty arrived.¹⁹ Showers also meant little more than quickly rinsing off because soap was rationed. One internee remembers when the camp authorities provided the tiniest piece of soap for 100 people, an absurd situation in which the internees responded with laughter.²⁰ Each night, they slept on beds infested with lice, fleas, and other insects. Each day, they wore the same set of clothes, which they cleaned with the polluted water, and many had no shoes.²¹ Camp officials often took the few belongings internees brought with them upon arrival, but the prisoners seldom got them back and never received compensation for their losses.²²

A considerable percentage of the internees were children. In April 1941, children numbered 2000 out of Camp Joffre's total population of 8000.²³ To accommodate the

¹⁹ Pedro Nadal, personal account, in Boitel's *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941-1942*, 40.

²⁰ Espérance Navarro, interview from 9 February 2007, in Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 55.

²¹ Ibid., 53.

²² Boitel, *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941-1942*, 141; this happened all throughout France during World War II, both in the camps and outside the camps. This occurrence is collectively called the "spoliation des biens juifs"—the despoliation of Jewish belongings, though at Rivesaltes victims of this included non-Jews. For more information on this, see the works of Annette Wieviorka, Sarah Gensburger, and Serge Klarsfeld.

²³ Peschanski, *La France des camps*, 238.

growing number of births, camp officials allowed women in the late stages of pregnancy to go to the château “mas Mirous,” which both camp authorities and the internees called the “Elne Maternity Ward.”²⁴ Some very ill young children were also sent to the château to improve their condition. The French humanitarian “Organization for aiding children” (OSE) created and staffed this house as an unofficial, off-site part of the camp, but most of those taken there were not allowed to stay for more than a few weeks, though a few stayed for months. At the actual camp, humanitarian organizations including the OSE, another French agency set up to support refugees in France (CIMADE), the American Unitarian Service Committee (USC), and the Swiss Red Cross took care of the interned children.²⁵ Most of these organizations were based in Sector K, one of the two Jewish sectors. They tried most of all to provide more food for the internees—especially milk—but they also worked to provide them with clothes, books, and items with which to play games or sports.²⁶ The famous Swiss Red Cross nurse Friedel Bohny-Reiter, who worked at Rivesaltes from 1941 to 1942, later published a journal that described the terrible conditions that children (especially Jewish children) endured during this period.

The Vichy government decided to get involved with the care of the camp’s children in May 1941 when it opened a school on the site. Over 1500 children between the ages of six and fourteen attended this school, which was divided into 38 forty-student classes.²⁷ The number of students dropped to less than 250 within a year, however, as students stopped attending; school was not obligatory, and therefore attendance was not enforced. The buildings in which the camp held classes had no heat, there were precious

²⁴ Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 63.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 67-68, 72.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

few materials with which to teach, and, as one internee said, they “did not learn anything.”²⁸ All of these factors quickly contributed to a widespread apathy towards school.

Cultural and social life was not particularly rich at the camp. In contrast to the Camp des Milles, the Camp de Rivesaltes was not filled with artists and intellectuals at any point. The establishment of the Vichy regime brought worse conditions to les Milles, leading to a lack of cultural events there, and this period at the Camp de Rivesaltes also became particularly bleak in regards to social and cultural life. Jewish internees could only gather in the foyer of Sector K to socialize, as well as in two foyers in Sector J—one intended for putting on and viewing theatrical productions, and the other for children. Non-Jewish internees could also gather in the foyers of Sectors B and J to produce and view plays or performances. Humanitarian organizations arranged events in these spaces in an attempt to better the lives of the camp’s inhabitants. The YMCA also set up a library with works in several different languages, trying to give internees an escape from the serious concerns that plagued their lives at the Camp de Rivesaltes. Occasionally camp officials organized benefit concerts in conjunction with humanitarian organizations or the state, where the internees would perform.²⁹ It seems terribly ironic that these internees had to play at such events to raise money for the same government that imprisoned and mistreated them.

The camp changed its functions for the Jewish population in August 1942, when it no longer served as a transit and internment camp, but rather as a deportation camp after

²⁸ Isabelle Campos, account from *Etudes tsiganes*, n°23-24, in *ibid.*, 70.

²⁹ Boitel, *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941-1942*, 157-159.

the Vichy government signed the Bousquet-Knochen agreement.³⁰ Nine convoys left Rivesaltes for Drancy between August and October 1942, and the Rivesaltes deportees were sent from Drancy to Auschwitz. There were 2,313 Jewish men, women, and children at Camp Joffre who boarded train cars intended for animals. In each car, officials threw in a handful of hay and one bowl or two in which the deportees could relieve themselves, and the travel conditions for the Joffre internees were as bad as the conditions for those deported from the Camp des Milles.³¹ Some of those deported from Rivesaltes had been interned earlier at the Camp des Milles, but some internees were able to escape deportation.³² In fact, the Camp de Rivesaltes had a very high number of escapees compared to other camps, and in 1942 alone more than 850 people escaped.³³ Those who escaped were lucky, because none of the 2,313 deported Jews would survive Drancy or Auschwitz.³⁴ Others attempted suicide or were seriously injured as they tried to jump off the trains.

III. Rivesaltes After Jewish Internment: 1942-2007

By 24 November 1942, the Rivesaltes camp was empty. Camp officials sent the remaining prisoners to other camps in the unoccupied zone or relocated them nearby to continue work with the GTE.³⁵ Less than a week later, German “intervention” troops took over the camp to use it as a military barracks. Camp Joffre served a particular purpose for these troops in allowing them to keep an eye on the Mediterranean. The Germans stayed

³⁰ See chapter two for more details on this agreement.

³¹ Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 78.

³² Robert Mencherini, “De la galaxie des Milles,” in his directed work *Provence-Auschwitz: De l'internement des étrangers à la déportation des juifs (1939-1944)* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2007), 30.

³³ Boitel, *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941-1942*, 132.

³⁴ Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 78.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

until 19 August 1944, when they left in haste and destroyed many of the camp's structures on their way out.³⁶ One month later, the camp changed hands again as Vichy leaders fled the country. French Resistants, specifically Maquisards, soon reopened the camp as a "Surveillance Center" with the help of the new Minister of the Interior in the Pyrénées-Orientales department—within which the camp was located. In a striking reversal of political and military positions, Rivesaltes was now used to house captured German soldiers, members of the infamous Vichy "Milice," the "Légion des volontaires français" (Frenchmen who voluntarily fought on the Eastern Front for the Nazis during the war), and other collaborators, including some members of the pro-Vichy press.³⁷ Many of the new French internees were later moved to other camps, but some stayed at Rivesaltes to await trial during the "Purge" that took place between 1944 and 1951. Nazi soldiers, treated as prisoners of war, lived in particularly deplorable conditions at Camp Joffre, where they suffered from high rates of disease and mortality. This Surveillance Camp closed in 1948 before the Purge ended.

In December 1951 the camp reopened as a military installment called the "Rivesaltes Center for Accelerated Technical Military Training." The French government created this program to train selected voluntary conscripts from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The goal was to assimilate these "French Muslims," as the government collectively called them, by teaching them military basics and other skills that would lead to a profession. The conscripts were also required to study French, and to receive a French civic education.³⁸ Camp Joffre continued to function in this way until 1969, but

³⁶ Ibid., 19.

³⁷ Ibid., 115.

³⁸ Ibid., 22-23.

starting in 1957 the camp also became a mobilization point for the regular French troops that departed for Algeria up until 1962.³⁹

The end of the Algerian War brought new changes to the camp. It ceased to operate as an active base for troop deployment and again became a place of internment, even though “internment” was not part of the camp’s name. In February 1962, the French government turned one area of the camp into a prison for those who supported the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)—the key group involved that was leading the fight for Algerian independence. A mere one month later, after signing the Evian Accords that recognized Algerian independence and “ended” the war, the government began to release the FLN prisoners.⁴⁰ With these Accords came an exodus of Pieds-noirs (individuals with French origins who settled in Algeria) and Harkis (ethnic Algerians who served in the French army or government) out of Algeria into France, and the Harkis found themselves in a particularly difficult situation: Algeria was no longer part of France and therefore the Harkis no longer had the protection of the French government, French citizenship, or French-funded jobs. In addition, Algerian nationalists did not view the Harkis as true Algerians, and they were condemned as traitors, oppressors, and collaborators. They therefore suffered at the hands of Algerian citizens who even went so far as to massacre groups of them at a time following the Evian Accords. Thus many Harkis fled or attempted to flee the country for France, hoping to find refuge there. The French government, despite knowing the situation Harkis faced in Algeria, tried to restrict their immigration by introducing legislation that only allowed in a “limited number” of those

³⁹ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 128.

deemed “particularly threatened.”⁴¹ Many nevertheless reached France with their families as illegal immigrants, scared of being killed, or punished like so many of their compatriots in Algeria. Sadly, many of those who made it to France were killed by hostile French citizens upon their arrival at the ports at Marseille and Toulon, or they were immediately sent back to Algeria.⁴²

A large number of Harkis eventually moved into France despite the violence and despite the attempts of the French government to keep them out of the country. Officials then faced the challenge of accommodating all of these immigrants. The government could no longer avoid assuming responsibility for the Harkis who were on French soil; and the French public would increasingly disapprove of the official indifference to the Harkis, especially since they were military veterans. As a result, the government housed them in camps like Rivesaltes. For a while, they did not live in any of the buildings at Camp Joffre; they lived in tents because of the dilapidated state of the former barracks. Thousands of Harkis and their families spent the cold, windy winter of 1962 in khaki military tents on the barren, arid land where the camp was located.⁴³ They later moved into four of the site’s sectors, including one that had housed Jews during World War II. Two families, who often did not know each other prior to their arrival at the camp, lived together in each individual barracks. The camp officials tried to make “villages” out of the sectors, and as part of this plan, members of each “village” were not allowed to communicate with others outside of their own “village.” Many of the internees were

⁴¹ Hamoumou and Moumen, “L’histoire des harkis,” in Stora and Harbi’s *La Guerre d’Algérie*, 332.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *Le Monde*, 8 October 1962.

confused by this ban on communications; as one stated: “we had no idea what the actual rules were, it was like that—laws that weren’t written but that everyone respected.”⁴⁴

The Harkis at the camp were not classified as prisoners, but they were more or less treated as such. They were subjected to various rules that limited their freedoms, including restrictions on their communications with other camp residents. Another particular way in which they saw themselves as essentially prisoners of the French government was their inability to leave the site without special passes, which were extremely hard to come by. One Harki detailed his encounter with a guard at the border of the camp: “We arrived at Rivesaltes at 4 AM and two hours later, after getting dressed, I decided to go into the village to buy a newspaper. A soldier intercepted me and asked, ‘Do you have a pass?’ [I responded,] ‘Why? Am I a prisoner?’ ‘No, sir, but you need a pass to leave the camp.’”⁴⁵ It seemed odd to many that those who served in the French military and who came to France for refuge now found themselves interned by the French government. Years later, one female internee said that she was convinced that the French were trying to “hide” them from the French public.⁴⁶ Those interned certainly lived in a sort of ghetto—purposefully kept away from the rest of France’s population, subjected to a different set of rules, and confined within lower living standards.

During their internment at Rivesaltes, Harkis did not live in conditions as miserable as those that the previously interned Spaniards, Jews, and Gypsies experienced during their time at the camp, but they lived there much longer. The French military generally took decent physical care of the internees, providing them with ample food,

⁴⁴ Souaifia, interview from 3 November 2006, in Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 94.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴⁶ Zohra Mares, account recorded in Fatima Besnaci-Lancou’s collection of statements from female internees, *Nos mères, paroles blessées* (Léchelle, France: Editions Emina Soleil, 2007), 34.

clean water, and access to satisfactory healthcare. The greatest problems Harkis and their families reported were the extreme weather conditions and the filthy state of their beds, but above all they constantly feared they would be sent back to Algeria.⁴⁷ The French officials provided internees with clothes soon after their arrival at Rivesaltes. This particular detail posed many problems for the Harkis because many of them—the majority, in fact—arrived at the camp in their uniforms. A good number of the Harkis believed that during their time in France they would finish their service time in the French military. They did not realize, however, that the French government did not intend to keep them in the military; in fact, the government wanted the Harkis to become “civilians” as soon as possible.⁴⁸

One could speculate about the many reasons why the French government and French military wanted this—to cut costs, to absolve the military of responsibility for the Harkis, to attempt to assimilate the “French Muslims” whose traditional garb and soon-to-be-retired military uniforms would not fit in French society, among other reasons. Whatever the exact intent, the “demobilization” had clear effects: Harkis had already been stripped of their Algerian identity and now they were also to lose their identity as French soldiers and the families of soldiers—the same identity that had given them reasons to fight for a French Algeria, that had caused many of their comrades-in-arms to die at the hands of fellow Algerians and fellow French soldiers, and that had forced them to leave their “homeland”—to use the word preferred by the French-Algerian author Assia Djebar when she writes on the complexities of French-Algerian identity.⁴⁹ Many

⁴⁷ Ibid., 34 and Besnaci-Lancou’s own account in *ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁸ Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 96.

⁴⁹ Assia Djebar, *La Disparition de la langue française* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 2003), 13. Djebar uses this particular English term to refer to Algeria from a French-Algerian’s point-of-

Harkis understandably rejected the clothes offered them and continued to wear their old, faded uniforms. They still responded to “Garde à vous,” saluted officers, and helped raise and lower the French flag each day at the camp.⁵⁰

The French government further stripped Harkis of their French identity in the most significant way possible—by revoking their citizenship. This was a consequence of the Evian Accords when Algeria was no longer part of France, and therefore its inhabitants were no longer French, except for the Pieds-noirs, whose French citizenship remained intact because of their claims to “French” ancestry. This revocation of French citizenship became official policy on 1 July 1962, leaving the Harkis confused and upset.⁵¹ They held French citizenship before, and had they not earned the right to keep their citizenship after fighting for France? One Harki refused to go in front of the tribunal that would evaluate requests for French citizenship, stating to the head officer of his sector of the camp, “I’m already French. If I’m not, why do you call me a ‘French Muslim’?”⁵² This same officer also refused to allow this internee and others to express yet another part of their identity—their faith. He refused their request for a place of prayer, saying that they were “in France now” and needed to forget their Muslim religion. The same Harki brought up once more that the French called him and his fellow Harkis “French Muslims.” Both times the officer refuted key parts of this identity—firstly their identity as French, and secondly their identity as Muslim.⁵³ These internees thus had, in

view, feeling as though using the Arabic for home or the French for home would not work because it’s not one or the other, since the French-Algerian’s identity lies in a gray area. These Harkis’ identities were similar in this way—not belonging wholly to one country or the other, if either, at all.

⁵⁰ Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 97.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵² Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize chibanis harkis* (Paris: Editions Tirésias, 2006), 15.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

the eyes of the French, no military affiliation, no nation, and no religion, leaving without any recognized identity, except perhaps the identity of a camp “internee;” one mother recalled her sadness when her child told a friend that “Mamie and papy are from Rivesaltes,” after the friend had asked her grandparents’ place of origin.⁵⁴ Their place of internment became the Harki identifier. Despite the mistreatment by the French, the majority of the Harkis at Rivesaltes chose to be French and requested French citizenship.⁵⁵ They had little other choice. As a final challenge to the former identity of these Harkis, however, the French government altered their last names and made them “French.”⁵⁶ The internees then lost the inherited name of their family identity.

Though these families were military families, the French military did not want to take responsibility for them by actually managing the camp. It intended to make the camp a civilian site, which would allow the French military to leave. To this end, the military tried to find jobs for as many internees as possible—jobs out of the public view for which they would leave early in the morning and return late at night so as not to be seen. Internees usually worked in forestry, though some worked in agriculture or in industrial production.⁵⁷ Those fit for work eventually moved away from the camp into newly constructed subsidized housing that was intended specifically for them. For a while, the government considered charging the Harkis rent for staying at Rivesaltes after it took over administration of the camp, but ultimately officials abandoned this thought.⁵⁸ The government classified those unfit for work as “beyond help.” Though the camp officially

⁵⁴ Berkhta, testimony in Besnaci-Lancou’s *Nos mères*, 45.

⁵⁵ *Le Monde*, 31 December 1962.

⁵⁶ Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 102.

⁵⁷ *Le Monde*, 28 November 1963.

⁵⁸ Marcos & Marcos, *Les Camps de Rivesaltes*, 107-109.

closed as a detention center for Harkis in 1964, many of these families stayed at Rivesaltes until 1971, when the last few Harkis and their families finally left.⁵⁹

In 1964, the same year the Harki camp “officially” closed, troops from the African nation Guinea began to arrive. Though Guinea was no longer a French colony at that time, many of its citizens had signed 15-year service contracts with the French military before independence. A large number of these men did not want to lose the salary and pension they would receive from the French military, and therefore they attempted to continue to serve. Continuing to wear the French uniform in the newly independent nation, they were expelled from Guinea in 1964. These individuals carried out the rest of their service at the Camp de Rivesaltes between November 1964 and October 1966. The French military also tried to “civilianize” these troops, but in contrast to the Harkis they refused to work in jobs outside of the public eye. Most chose to stay in France after 1966, usually working in civilian jobs, though some remained in the military. Those who did neither of these things were sent back to Guinea. These were the last colonial troops at the camp.⁶⁰

From 1971 to 1986, the camp served solely as a military installation for French troops, returning to its original purpose. It housed the 24th Marine Infantry Regiment, which eventually left the site and ultimately dissolved in 1991.⁶¹ In 1986, the camp became a detainment center for illegal immigrants, again coming to house a great number of Algerians. This new detainment occurred after the passage of the Pasqua law in the same year. Further laws restricting immigration followed in 1997 and 2006, thus keeping Rivesaltes open as a center for internment and deportations. The government limited

⁵⁹ Ibid., 108-109.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 26-27.

⁶¹ Ibid., 28.

internees' stays to two days, though court orders from a judge could extend their time to fifteen days. Prisoners stayed in many of the same buildings that had been used since the camp's construction; only three additional structures were built between 1986 and 2007. Detainees spent more than twelve hours a day in nine by nine meter cells with nothing more than a bed—not even a toilet, and they only spent one hour outside with police supervision, weather permitting. Reading was prohibited.⁶² From the camp, the government deported internees to their countries of origin—usually Algeria, Morocco, and Latin American nations. The camp finally ceased operation in 2007, as the government decided it was more efficient to deport immigrants from and detain them in other areas in France.⁶³ Rivesaltes moved into a new phase of its history as it changed from an internment center and military camp into a memory site.

IV. Remembering Rivesaltes in the Shadow of the Holocaust

To preface this section, it is important to note the intended foci: the commemoration of Jewish internment at Rivesaltes and the commemoration of later Harki and Algerian internments at the same place. This part will not include an in-depth discussion of all remembrance surrounding these two groups, most especially Harkis, whose history at Rivesaltes and other camps is connected to many of the population's protests and movements. This does not preclude, of course, the discussion of more general topics related to these two groups and the memories of their pasts that bear particular importance on analysis of commemoration at Camp Joffre.

When discussing remembrances of Jewish internment at the site, one must discuss the controversies surrounding the *fichiers des juifs*—large files kept in both unoccupied

⁶² Ibid., 131.

⁶³ Ibid.

and occupied France that held information on almost all Jews in France during World War II. French police used these files to identify Jews with the intention of “rounding them up,” interning them, and sometimes deporting them. General de Gaulle ordered these *fichiers* destroyed at the end of the war, as a practical step toward reducing divisive memories in the newly unified country. Some files fell through the cracks, however, including the Parisian files of 1941 and 1942 that were used to round up Jews in the famous “rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv.”⁶⁴ In later years, many other departments in France found their own area’s *fichier*, including the Pyrénées-Orientales department, where the rediscovered *fichier* gave the names of all the Jews interned in and deported from the Camp Joffre de Rivesaltes between 1940 and 1942.⁶⁵ The local government found this file in the spring of 1997, and many were surprised to learn that the camp had been used to intern Jews before their deportation because it was never previously connected to the Holocaust in French history. Before this discovery of key documents, the French knew the site held Spanish refugees in the late 30s, “political prisoners” starting in 1943, and “displaced persons” starting in 1945.⁶⁶ There were certainly those who knew that Jews were also interned there, but the “official” and printed version of history made no note of either the internment or deportations.

A little over a year after the discovery of the *fichier* in Perpignan, various politicians, artists, and other citizens signed a petition for the protection of the camp as an official “lieu de mémoire,” detailing three demands: that at least one barracks remain in its then current dilapidated state, that one of the barracks be reconstructed to look like those used during World War II, and that the government create a multidisciplinary

⁶⁴ *Le Monde*, 13 November 1991.

⁶⁵ Boitel, *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941-1942*, 277.

⁶⁶ *Le Monde*, 8 October 1962.

documentation center.⁶⁷ Responding to such demands, the government declared the camp an historical site on 4 May 2000 and then an official “lieu de mémoire” on 17 June 2000. Four commemorative plaques were eventually placed on the road that connects the various sectors of the camp—one for Spanish Republican refugees, one for interned and deported Jews, one for interned Gypsies, and one for Harkis.⁶⁸ Plans have also been developed to create a memorial on the site, now that the camp has officially ceased operation as a detainment center. The French state has commissioned famous architect Rudy Ricciotti to design the space.⁶⁹ Now Rivesaltes has become tied to this memorial project, which came about due to a call to remember the Jewish victims interned there between 1940 and 1942. But the emphasis on the Holocaust remembrance has again obscured the camp’s role as an internment center for other groups, including the Harkis and later Algerian immigrants.

Though Algerians, particularly Harkis, spent the most time at and have the longest history with Camp de Rivesaltes, their experiences there receive little recognition. As scholar and anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano states, “Harki history is a history of negated spaces.”⁷⁰ Rivesaltes is a “negated space” for Harkis and their memories. Beyond the plaque placed at the site, there has been no commemoration of the camp as a place in which to remember the Harkis’ past, nor a move to commemorate it as such. More generally, many Harkis and their descendants have protested for recognition of the harms committed by the French state against them. In 1994, the National Assembly passed a law

⁶⁷ Grégory Tuban, “Camp Joffre de Rivesaltes. Un mémorial en souffrance...,” in *La Semaine de Roussillon* from 22 October 1998, 6-7, found in Boïtel’s *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941-1942*, 277-278.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 277-278.

⁶⁹ *Le Monde*, 3 June 2013.

⁷⁰ Vincent Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound that Never Heals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 193.

recognizing Harkis' and colonial soldiers' participation in France's campaigns in North Africa and Indochina. In this law, the French state also guaranteed some subsidies for these veterans and their families.⁷¹ This was the first step towards a complete recognition of Harki history, if there could ever be such a thing as "complete" recognition. One must note that the French state equated Harkis with colonial soldiers with this bill, effectively "negating" Harki identity, for Harkis never saw themselves as colonial subjects during their time of service; they saw themselves as French. This fact complicates the French view of Algeria because it shows that the French government still saw the Algeria of the Algerian War as French, but it did not view Algerians who fought for the French military then as French. The territory was French in the eyes of the nation, but the people native to this territory who fought for it to remain part of France were not. They were the "other."

Following perhaps the endeavors of Jewish victims and their descendants to push the French state to recognize its unjust policies, procure financial reparations from the government, and charge the guilty, a group of Harkis and their descendants filed a claim against France in August 2001, two years after the official recognition of the Algerian War.⁷² Just as Klarsfeld's actions led to the indictment and sometimes jailing of several individuals for crimes against humanity for their actions against Jews in World War II, this group expected a similar sort of justice for the Harkis that would involve charges of crimes against humanity. The difference here was that this group did not file suits against individual perpetrators; they filed a suit against the entire nation (that is to say the French government). The suit did not make it to court because the abandonment of the Harkis did not constitute a crime against humanity according to French judges because it did not

⁷¹ Assemblée nationale, Loi n°94-488, 1994, accessed via *Legifrance*.

⁷² Hamoumou and Moumen, "L'histoire des harkis," in Stora and Harbi's *La Guerre d'Algérie*, 343.

reveal a plan on the part of the French to “eliminate an entire population.”⁷³ Those who brought the suit against the state thought otherwise, comparing their abandonment to genocide.⁷⁴

Two months later in October 2001, then president of the Republic Jacques Chirac declared September 25th a national day of commemoration for the Harkis.⁷⁵ In his speech at the Palais d’Elysée, he stated:

“The Harkis will not remain the forgotten of a buried history. They must take their proper place in French memory. Historians must take up this cause, which should be carried out conscientiously and subjectively. Knowledge of the past—because it renders justice to the victims of history—can only serve to strengthen national unity. This *devoir de vérité* finds its natural course through a *devoir de reconnaissance*.”⁷⁶

Before speaking at the Palais d’Elysée, Chirac paid homage to the Harkis and their service at the Invalides.⁷⁷ This is extremely important to note because the Invalides is a lieu de mémoire specific to French veterans, dating back to the reign of Louis XIV. This means the state officially recognized the Harkis as French soldiers, though nearly forty years after their service ended and when many no longer actively held on to this identity because of their mistreatment and “abandonment” by the state.

Two years later, in 2003, two days before the same national day of commemoration in September, a manifesto was made public, called the “Manifesto for

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ See dedication in Boussad Azni’s work *Crime d’Etat: Généalogie d’un abandon* (Paris: Editions Ramsay, 2002). Azni is the son of a Harki, and he was part of the group that filed the suit against the French state.

⁷⁵ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Gilles Manceron, *Les Harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites* (Ivry-sur-Seine: Les Editions d’Atelier, 2008), 218.

⁷⁶ Jacques Chirac’s “Discours à l’occasion de la journée d’hommage national aux harkis,” in Azni, *Crime d’Etat*, 195.

⁷⁷ Hamoumou and Moumen, “L’histoire des harkis,” in Stora and Harbi’s *La Guerre d’Algérie*, 342.

the Reappropriation of Confiscated Memories.”⁷⁸ This document states that Harkis and immigrants should band together and “finally rewrite [their] history,” and it urges Harkis take up the “duty” and “responsibility” of “inscribing [their] common history in both French and Algerian collective memory...to reweave the thread of this confiscated memory, of this hidden heritage...to assure that the French and Algerians alike acquire an all-encompassing knowledge of this painful past in which they share.”⁷⁹ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou drafted the manifesto and many other prominent French citizens of both Harki and non-Harki Algerian descent signed it, including the deputy mayor of Paris, the deputy mayor of Strasbourg, novelist Leïla Sebbar, and the president of a prominent technology firm Yazid Sabeg, among others. Little came of this manifesto in terms of government response. However, this concept of “confiscated memories” is of consequence. Harkis, Algerian immigrants, and their descendants felt, and perhaps still feel, that France denied them their traumatic memories, and thus their identity, by refusing to recognize them. Since France refused and in many ways still refuses to acknowledge these traumatic memories and histories, it follows that the state would not recognize a site—*lieu*—of these memories, namely Rivesaltes.

Between 2003 and 2011, the movement for commemoration did not realize many of its goals. In 2012, however, something quite important occurred: President Nicolas Sarkozy, during his campaign for reelection, publicly recognized “the historical responsibility of France in the abandonment of the Harkis” in Perpignan, not far from the

⁷⁸ Besnaci-Lancou and Manceron, *Les Harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites*, 218.

⁷⁹ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, “Manifeste pour la ré-appropriation des mémoires confisquées,” 23 September 2004, accessed via http://www.ldh-toulon.net/IMG/manifeste_4oct04.pdf.

Camp de Rivesaltes.⁸⁰ He promised to do this when first elected to presidential office in 2007, but never did. During this campaign visit, he made more campaign promises in regards to commemoration including the installment of a national memorial in Paris. Many criticized him for this recognition because they saw him as simply choosing to do it in order to procure the Harki and Pied-noir vote. Others also criticized him for not going far enough with his recognition, stating that France did not just abandon the Harkis, they directly contributed to their massacre in Algeria. Going further with recognition would “open the door for financial compensation.”⁸¹ Whether Sarkozy’s statement accomplished complete recognition or not, and whether this was a political move or not, it has at the very least paved the way for future commemoration and for educating the French population about Harki, and French, history.

While many Harkis and their descendants criticize the French government for not going far enough and securing financial reparations for them, many others do not criticize it, stating that all they want is for their children to have better lives than they have had, with better and more secure job prospects.⁸² Still others say they do want official recognition on behalf of the government, but do not care if they receive financial reparations—they “only want [their] honor returned to [them].”⁸³ Some do not even want this recognition, afraid it may cause them and their children even more trouble than they have already suffered, preferring to, in a manner of speaking, keep their heads down and

⁸⁰ Elise Vincent, “M. Sarkozy reconnaît la responsabilité de la France dans l’abandon des harkis,” *Le Monde*, 17 April 2012.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Saïd, account published in Fatima Besnaci-Lancou’s *Treize chibanis harkis* (Paris: Editions Tirésias, 2006), 51.

⁸³ Ali, account published in *ibid.*, 56.

let God judge their persecutors.⁸⁴ These varied approaches to remembering the traumatic Harki-French past reveal exactly what historian Benjamin Stora found among all different people in regards to remembering the Algerian War, in general—that many different memories of a single event exist among all those directly or indirectly involved.⁸⁵ Such differences just within one group—the Harkis, themselves—complicate commemorative efforts, especially when those individuals vying for recognition use a Vichy Syndrome-like template which, if realized, would not allow the Harki memory to rest; it denies these victims the “right to forget,” just as it does for Holocaust victims.⁸⁶

Beyond not having power over whether their past gets collectively memorialized or not, Harkis, as well as Algerians, do not have power over how it gets memorialized. One might say this is the same for Holocaust victims, which is true. However, Harkis experience it in a different way because their history is part of a colonial past. Whether or not France considered Algeria as more than a colony or territory and the people as “French” and not Algerian, the country and the people were not “French” by the definitions of a certain ethno-cultural, nationalist perspective and were treated in much the same way as French colonies and their subjects. Algerians and Harkis were, and still are to a certain degree, not French in the eyes of many French citizens. This perception persists even if persons of Algerian origins obtained French citizenship or were born in France, according to the *français de souche*—the “true” or “native” French, an identity that does not truly exist by any exact definition, but rather ambiguous criteria like one’s “appearance” as “French.” Thus, when France commemorates Harkis and Algerians, it

⁸⁴ Youssef, account published in *ibid.*, 74.

⁸⁵ Benjamin Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire: De l’“Algérie française” au racisme anti-arabe* (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 1999).

⁸⁶ Eric Conan and Henry Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris, Editions Pluriel: 2013), 13.

commemorates them closer to the way in which it commemorates colonial subjects rather than French citizens; evidence of this can be found with things like the bill passed in 1994, mentioned earlier, which equated Harkis with colonial soldiers. The French state chooses their identity for them, and the identity chosen is a colonial one. This means their memories are also seen as colonial experiences, which cannot be denied, but taken singularly as colonial experiences denies the Harki, and other Algerians', identification as French. In addition, the simple fact that the French state *chooses* is important because this means that even in the era of post-decolonization, the colonizer continues to define the identity and memories of the formerly colonized.

Though both the October Massacre and the Harki/Algerian camp history relate to a colonial identity, it seems that the camp history is associated with it more so than the October Massacre. This is most likely because of the specific historical similarities and memorial connections the ratonnade has with rafle du Vél' Hiv. Thus the effect of the Vichy Syndrome on Rivesaltes differs from the effect of the Syndrome on the ratonnade. Though Rivesaltes is a shared *lieu de mémoire*, Holocaust memory at the site does not lead to the development of an obsession with and commemoration of Algerian persecution in the same place. The similarities between Jewish and Algerian internment stop with the simple fact that the two groups shared a internment site years apart from one another. In addition to a lack of reciprocal obsession as a result of relatively few specific connections with the Holocaust, the colonial past associated with the Algerian population interned in Camp Joffre is a barrier to commemoration, especially if those seeking commemoration expect the Vichy Syndrome—taken here as an obsession with seeking recognition that worked for a population without a colonial past—to work for

them. Harkis and Algerians chose this model because it was so successful—successful enough to almost totally eclipse all other modern traumatic pasts in France including their own—without recognizing its inapplicability to their situation. The obsession that has begun to develop around the ratonnade as a result of the Syndrome is an anomaly in French collective memory of Algerian War events. The Vichy Syndrome, this “past that does not pass,” complicates some and inadvertently denies other traumatic pasts, like the Algerian past at the Camp Joffre de Rivesaltes. In addition, if a Syndrome-like obsession succeeded for Algerian memory at Rivesaltes, such an obsession would lead to an “official,” perpetual colonial identity of the victims and their memories. They would not be able to escape the colonial past they have tried to move beyond in a “postcolonial” world, because it would not pass—that is the nature of the Vichy Syndrome.

Conclusion: Patterns and Problems in Modern Trauma

The French obsession with the Vichy and Occupation period certainly continues to this day. It simultaneously influences and is influenced by other pasts and their memories, specifically the Algerian War and its myriad memories. The continued construction of museums and memorials that commemorate the Holocaust in France demonstrate this, as do calls by victims of French oppression during the Algerian War for the same. Beyond affirming the Vichy Syndrome's contemporary presence, research on specific sites connected to these two pasts—the French implication in the Holocaust and the oppression of Algerian supporters of the FLN as well as Harkis during the Algerian War—reveal the links between their histories and the Vichy Syndrome because the Holocaust tends to dominate memories of past injustices.

First and foremost, this obsession marks a guilty conscience on the part of the French state that results from a failure to acknowledge known historical truths of the Vichy and Occupation period which implicate a large number of French citizens. The French state continues to struggle with its historical pattern of avoiding discussion and avoiding admittance of the truth about controversial, traumatic events in the name of preventing discord and preserving unity, both in regards to the Algerian War and the Holocaust. Secondly, a failure to officially recognize controversial aspects of the Algerian War may perpetuate France's obsession with its Vichy past. Papon and the Vélodrome d'Hiver, as *lieux de mémoire*, link aggression against Algerians in Paris with the round up of Jews in the city. Since there were many similarities between the ratonnade of Algerians and the rafle of Jews, a lack of official recognition for one

perpetuates the over-commemoration and frequent recollection of the other; the two pasts and their memories do not rest.

Thirdly, victims of Algerian War-related events who seek public recognition of their trauma accept the Syndrome—here meaning official state recognition of complicity in the Holocaust, the procurement of reparations for victims and their families, and the trial of guilty parties—as a template for their path to recognition because of its perceived success for another minority. This is problematic because though they share some similarities in regards to place and methods of oppression, the situations and identities of French-Jews and French-Algerians differ greatly. Therefore, they require different approaches in regards to official recognition that take into account each group's identities and desired outcomes. The Vichy Syndrome can in fact complicate and shroud commemoration of other traumatic events, specifically the Algerian War—internment and oppression of both Algerians who supported the FLN and Harkis. This speaks to the problems of attempting to apply what worked for one group, or a portion of one group, to another. It particularly complicates Algerian commemoration because the lack of recognition reinforces a colonized identity, where the colonizer still defines their lives and experiences in a “post-colonial” world. French-Algerians cannot break away from their “othered” identity which prevents them from fully realizing their French citizenship.

In regards to the idea of one past shrouding another, I reiterate that I do not intend to compare victimhood. One past is not of greater or lesser import than another, and the same with one memory within a group related to a certain history. No one event should be consciously forgotten in the face of the other. It is apparent, however, that one past, or rather its memorial presence, may make it difficult for another past to achieve official

recognition and commemoration. This is the case with the French Holocaust past and the French Algerian War past at the Camp de Rivesaltes; the Vichy Syndrome as it relates to the French Holocaust fully occupies and obsesses French collective memory of the site, making it difficult for other traumatic memories to achieve recognition there especially when there is still a reluctance to come to terms with the controversial aspects of French history that are connected to the Algerian War.

Some Holocaust victims and victims of violence in France during and after the Algerian War do not want to remember and therefore do not want recognition of past traumas like those suffered at the Camp de Rivesaltes. Some believe that forgetting will make their life easier in France, make them feel more integrated, and cause less discord with fellow French citizens. Some want to forget because commemoration effectively makes them relive the trauma. The Vichy Syndrome does not allow those victims to forget. As Roussio states, it denies a *droit à l'oubli*—"right to forget."¹ Rather it asserts a *devoir de mémoire*, or "duty to remember." Both ideas have their merits, after all one should not forget traumatic events that have a large impact on others' identities. However, at the same time, one should not deny a victim the right to forget. The balance here is a tricky one that requires sensitivity to the multiplicity of memorial desires among the victims of a trauma.

There are some positive consequences of the Vichy Syndrome. For one, it benefits research by leading to the discovery of new materials about these traumas and the partial or complete opening of archives previously closed to the public. It can also shed light on other issues even though it may sometimes shroud these same issues. Lastly, it can result

¹ Eric Conan and Henry Roussio, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard/Pluriel, 2013), 13.

in a place or places where those victims who desire commemoration and recognition can feel a sense of peace and justice. *Lieux de mémoire* might not be so strong as to give a final resting place for painful histories, especially when talking about the Holocaust in France and the Algerian War. The Vichy Syndrome makes that impossible, as it calls for constant recollection of an event—a *devoir de mémoire*. However, such memory sites can serve a purpose for victims and thus remain significant.

The Vichy Syndrome continues to complicate national collective French identities, specifically because of the French paradox mentioned throughout this thesis: the simultaneous desires to uphold universal human rights and for national unity. One calls for admitting the truth and serving justice, while the other calls the nation to forget in order to not sow discord. For French-Jewish identity, it can be problematic in the sense that in some ways it ignores the existence of multiple memories, identities, and struggles within the Jewish population, specifically in relation to the Holocaust. As stated before, however, it can also be positive through the provision of commemorative spaces for those victims and their families who feel remembering serves an important purpose for their identities and memories. For French-Algerian identities, it can be both positive and negative; it has led the state to recognize the persecution of Algerians, but this official recognition can also deny the existence of multiple memories, struggles, and identities amongst victims and their families as with French Jews, as well as unknowingly shroud Algerian-related pasts and memories.

I do not believe I can speak to what this means for other minority identities within France, as I do not want to imply that my research on the Vichy Syndrome is somehow applicable to all French and non-French traumas. These two cases of Algerian War-

related acts and Holocaust-related acts committed on French soil are thus special; their similarities and evident influence on one another make it possible to analyze, compare, and contrast them within the context of this Vichy Syndrome that impacts them both so heavily.

In regards to the larger study of memory and history, these conclusions suggest an “intersectional” approach to the historical study of trauma and memory. Here I use the term intersectional to mean the intersection of traumatic histories with one another. Many traumas and their related identities in the post-Holocaust world “intersect” with the Holocaust past and this cannot be ignored or extrapolated from analysis of these events and their commemoration. Another example of this “intersectionality” of traumatic histories would be in the inability to forget traumas committed in the colonial period in light of a trauma that occurs after the colonizers have left. In order to develop a better understanding of collective French identity and group identities within France, it is important to research and analyze traumatic events like the rafle du Vél’ d’Hiv and the rattachement d’octobre and their commemoration because traumatic events so often define large parts of individual, group, and national identity. France has faced particular challenges in reconciling the history of the Holocaust and the Algerian War with a prevailing national narrative about French support for universal human rights. But the struggle to accept the history of recent injustices in France suggests the difficulty of coming to terms with a painful pattern of injustices in any modern nation. Furthermore, such universal significance shows the importance of studying the history of memory and not just the history of events.

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